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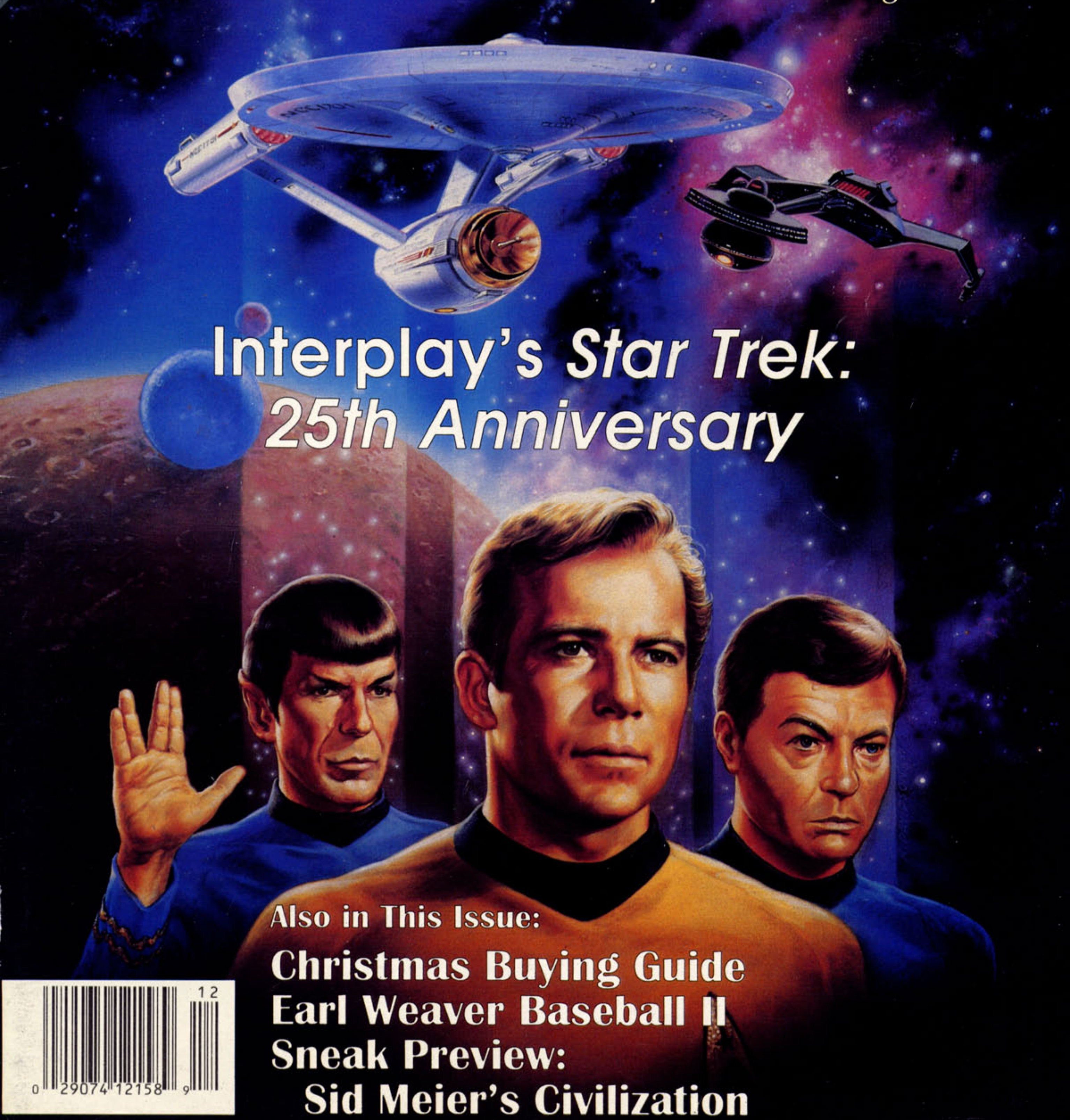
Number 89

December 1991

Battle Isle ● Rules of Engagement ● Wordtris

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

The Premier Computer Game Magazine



Interplay's *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary*

Also in This Issue:

Christmas Buying Guide

Earl Weaver Baseball II

Sneak Preview: Sid Meier's Civilization

December 1991 Number 89

Covering the World of Computer Games for Eleven Years

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

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Psalms 9:1-2

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EVERYONE KNOWS BUT INDY. AND HE'D BETTER LEARN FAST.



Plato knew about Atlantis. In a lost dialogue he wrote about the famed city and orichalcum, the mysterious element that powered the Atlantean's amazing machinery.

The Nazis know about Atlantis. They tracked down the lost dialogue, and realized orichalcum would yield them the ultimate weapon of the age.

Sophia knows about Atlantis. She unearthed a mysterious necklace and beads of orichalcum during an Icelandic archeological dig with Indy. Their magical properties made her a psychic.

Everyone knows but Indy. And he's got to learn fast. The Nazis are one step ahead of him — from Iceland to North Africa to the Azores to… Atlantis.

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Indy and Sophia cross many paths on the way to rediscovering the lost continent.

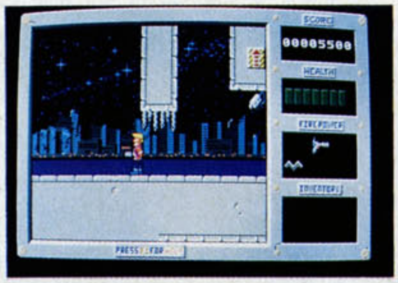


The ancient necklace hides many mysteries from the past.

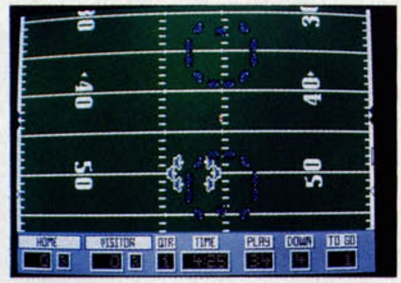
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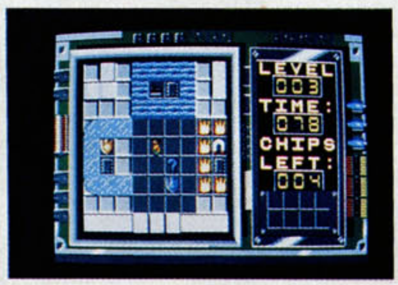
Playmaker Football



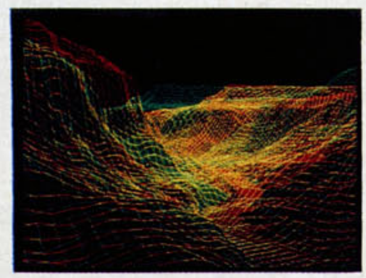
Home Alone



Ski-ulator



Chip's Challenge



Fly the Grand Canyon

Apogee Software Productions
Garland, TX
(800) 852-5659

DUKE NUKEM and PAGANITZU: A dynamic arcade duo with a couple of "pluses," Apogee Software has a fine knack for bringing IBM-bound computer gamers a taste of what they're missing with a SEGA Genesis. *Duke Nukem*, for instance, uses over a meg of EGA/VGA graphics and a fast frame rate that makes motion very smooth indeed. *Paganitzu* takes hero Alabama Smith (*Hmmm...*) through the lost ark, er, Aztec pyramid (yeah, that's right) where as many as 130 animated objects might be on the screen at once. Both games are the first of shareware trilogies and each offers on-line hints and instructions. IBM ($15.00 each). Circle Reader Service #1.

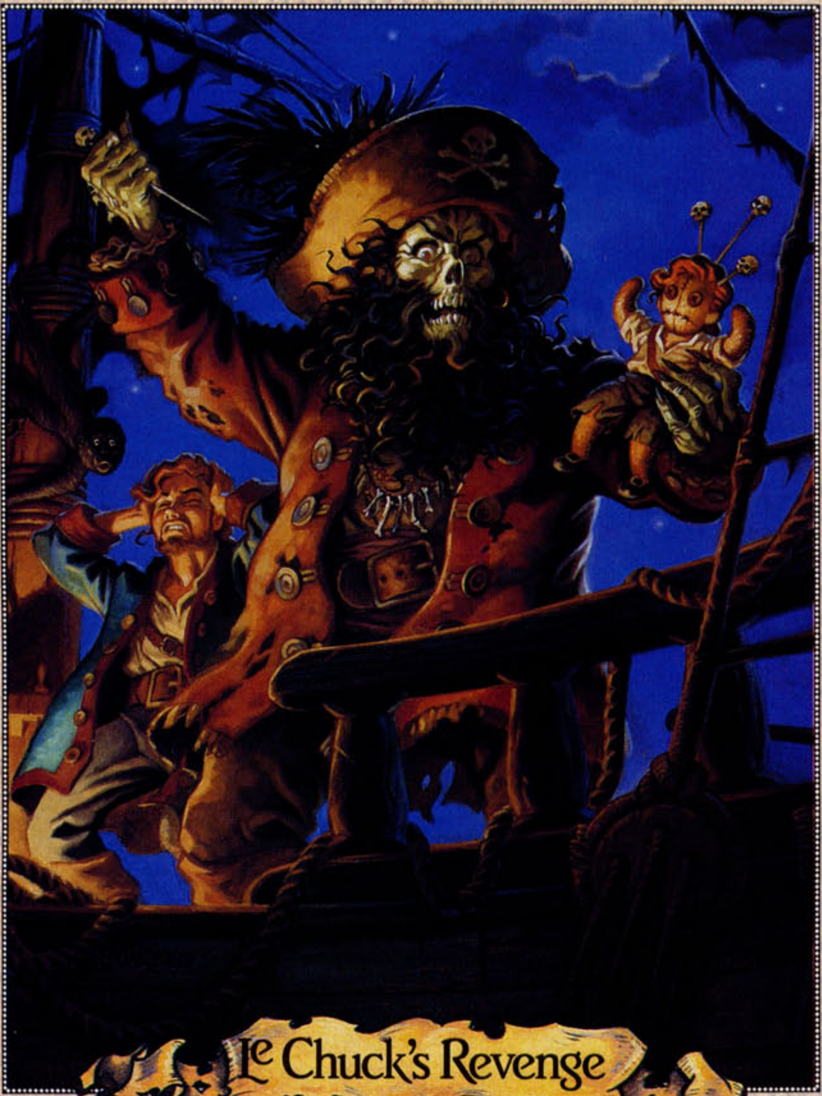
Broderbund
San Rafael, CA

PLAYMAKER FOOTBALL: Originally published on the Macintosh, this is a fantastic pure strategy football game. Players can design a team from scratch, using both a "Team Draft" function that allows each player to be customized and a "Chalkboard" utility that lets plays be designed from the ground up. It has a convenient, icon-driven interface to help players design their personalized team playbooks and artificial intelligence routines with situational awareness. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #2.

Capstone
Miami, FL

HOME ALONE: Cut from the classic 2-dimensional multi-level scrolling arcade game mold, here is what licensing a hit movie can do for a computer game. Of the same ilk as **Disney**'s *Arachnophobia*, our hero must run, jump and set traps which will reduce the points of the two bumbling burglars as they chase him through the latter half of the game. While some nice digitized pictures are included in the "must watch every time"

NOBODY LAUGHS WHEN THIS PIRATE PLAYS WITH DOLLS.



It's giving Guybrush a headache.
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All of the musicians we wanted are working in '70's comeback bands. So we scored a few tunes ourselves, added some great sound effects and went home.

We did the best we could.
We're not perfect. But we think scanned art, scintillating soundtracks, rehashed jokes and a great story get us close —and over budget, too.

LeChuck's Revenge

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Haunting secrets from the first game revealed



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Thicker, richer puzzley goodness

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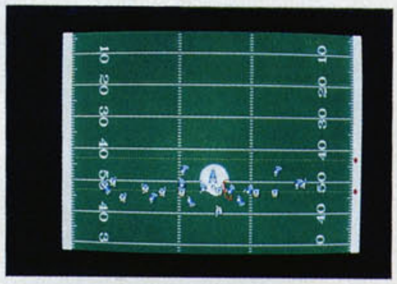
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Chinese Checkers



7 Colors



NFL Pro League Football



Might & Magic III



The Perfect General



The Lost Admiral

opening credits, the game quickly becomes repetitive. Billed as "family entertainment without the family," it's not exactly long on entertainment, either. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #3.

Eagle Graphics Company
Ellicott City, MD
(800) 253-8712

SKI-ULATOR: Clearly, designer Dan Meyer must be a combination rocket scientist/computer programmer/skier. *Ski-ulator*, with its simulation feel, factors in gravity, wind resistance, friction, etc. and allows players to race the clock and simulate real skiing skills. Tucks, half-tucks, flying through the air, helicopters and more all add to the "rush" that makes skiing the popular sport it is today. Using EGA-level graphics, the three courses are challenging enough to leave any hot dogger laid up in a cast. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #4.

Epyx
Redwood City, CA

CHIP'S CHALLENGE: Proving that a game doesn't have to be too fancy to be good, *Chip's Challenge* is a straightforward puzzle-solving game. Packed with amusing graphics and a gross of unique timed one-player tiered puzzles, the player must collect the microchips needed to reach the next level. Of course, keys, magnets, shields, etc. must be collected along the way to reach these chips, while monsters and barriers keep things hectic. This is the type of puzzle game that has a unique appeal to those for whom puzzle games are not their usual cup of tea. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #5.

Hyacinth
Norcross, GA

FLY THE GRAND CANYON: This simulatoresque software allows its user to take a "flying tour" of the Grand Canyon through a line-drawn 3-D virtual world. With the lines drawn in different colors, players will have to don those famous red-and-green 3-D glasses of yesteryear as they travel through an actual topographical map of this famous national park. Almost requiring a high-speed computer, this is a '90s version of the old Victorian Era "stereoscope" (i.e., something interesting to look at, but not really something to "play"). IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #6.

Imagisoft, Inc.
Albuquerque, NM
(505) 242-1998

CHINESE CHECKERS: This beautiful EGA/VGA piece of shareware faithfully recreates the game of Chinese Checkers. For 0-6 players, each slot can be played by either a human or computer player or left vacant. The canny AI plays an intelligent game and on-line rules and move hints are available. You know, Imagisoft would probably sell a zillion of this little gem if they had a licensing hook like "Bruce Lee Chinese Checkers." Well worth a look. IBM ($14.95). Circle Reader Service #7.

Infogrames
London, England

7 COLORS: Something else from overseas, here is a pure strategy game complete with "7 colors." A board consisting of diamonds must be conquered from a player's corner by selecting the most promising color to absorb. The first one to get over 50% of the board takes the game. Opponents cannot select each other's colors, and a clock is running throughout, forcing players to make hasty moves. Well, at least the AdLib sound support is relaxing! The patented "Nocopi Security Paper" used in the copy protection is something of a marvel, too, in that it can only be read when the light shines from behind it. IBM. Circle Reader Service #8.

Micro Sports, Inc.
Hixson, TN

NFL PRO LEAGUE FOOTBALL: An update of the older version, this football has that magic "NFL license" and is known for its completeness. With 140 teams from 1987 to the present included (with the actual player names, stats and uniforms to match), players may also draft their own "fantasy" teams as well. Stat compiling runs in over 200 categories per team, the game also features stacks of plays, weather conditions, scouting reports and more. Play is supported by the USA Today Sports Center league (via modem) for those who like true national competition. IBM ($79.95). Circle Reader Service #9.



It's a Human Zoo
Don't let mankind die in captivity...
Trapped in the ruins of Washington D.C., the last survivors of the human race are on the brink of extinction. Robot keepers hold them captive in the Human Preserve, an exclusive zoo for the highest species on the planet. The preserve has a thousand hiding places, but it's hard to tell enemies from friends. You'll meet a reclusive scientist with mysterious motives and a bottomless bag of tricks. A beautiful woman is trapped in a high-tech palace swarming with robot guards. There's a robot in the White House. The Capitol is full of Death Poodles. The old subway is a river of slime where Harry the Subhuman holds the key to the darkest secrets of the Preserve. You're the only one who can put it all together and fight back. Go ahead. Beat the 'bots. Free D.C.. You can do it. Maybe.
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INTERACTIVE
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New World Computing
Hollywood, CA

MIGHT & MAGIC III: After the long (but diverting) installation, one quickly discovers that New World Computing's penchant for *big* role-playing adventures will be taken to new heights. A state-of-the-art sequel to the two previous *Might & Magic* games, number three includes full VGA graphics and sound support, a point-and-click interface, auto-mapping galore, icon-based information displays, parties of eight and much more. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #10.

Quantum Quality Productions, Inc.
Flemington, NJ

THE PERFECT GENERAL: As previewed in issue #86, *The Perfect General* is a hex-grid, tactical level, abstract WWII-era wargame with modem play features. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #11.

THE LOST ADMIRAL: As previewed in issue #87, *The Lost Admiral* is an abstract naval game in the best *Empire* tradition. An extremely challenging computer opponent and a plethora of scenarios and campaign games greatly enhance this "deep" strategy game. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #12.

ReadySoft, Inc.
Rochmond Hill, Ontario, Canada
(416) 731-4175

WRATH OF THE DEMON: Another exercise in arcade action and wrist reflexes, *Wrath of the Demon* sports a fantasy storyline to go with this one. With virtually no instructions necessary (and an equal amount provided), players will quickly find themselves jumping, hitting, crouching, rolling and doing other neat tricks developed over countless quarters' worth of experience from hanging around the video arcades. IBM. Circle Reader Service #13.

Simulations Canada
Bridgewater, Nova Scotia

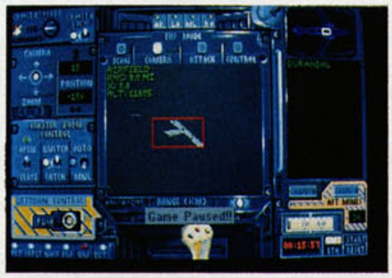
BATTLE TANK—KURSK TO BERLIN: Every wargame has some sort of "you are there" perspective. In the SimCan *Battle Tank* series, you are the corps commander/radio operator, this time on the Russian Front from 1943-45. The player(s) listen to radio reports from their units, assessing their status and issuing them new orders. One's tank companies, infantry companies and artillery batteries check in, updating humans with "messages from the front." With no sounds or graphics, this purely mental exercise requires a bit more imagination than other wargames of its ilk. IBM ($60.00). Circle Reader Service #14.



The Wrath of the Demon



C.Y.P.H.E.R.—Operation Wildlife



Megafortress



Corporation

PACIFIC STORM—THE SOLOMONS CAMPAIGN: From the menu masters at Simulations Canada, this easy-to-play string of complex calculations recreates the WWII land, air and sea battles around Guadalcanal. As in their *Malta Storm*, players can get involved in as much detail as they want, leaving the rest for the "staff" (computer AI) to work out. Many options may be toggled for "what ifs" and a laminated cardstock map and grease pencils are included so that players "create their own" graphics. All in all, an absorbing exercise in combat report reading. IBM ($60.00). Circle Reader Service #15.

Tanager Software Productions
San Leandro, CA
(415) 430-0900

C.Y.P.H.E.R.—OPERATION WILDLIFE: Sort of a "*Cardinal of the Wilderness*" game, this first product from Tanager Software puts players in the shoes of a C.Y.P.H.E.R. (Courageous Young Partners in Hush-hush Electronic Radiotelegraphy) agent, out to complete missions through a city streets and wildlife park. With a touch of "*Where in the Heck is Carmine ElSegundo*," the game includes a built-in FunCyclopedia with all of the information required to successfully complete every mission. Edutainment for older (9+ year old) kids, or a diversion for adults, everyone will learn a lot more about mammals playing this game. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #16.

Three-Sixty
Campbell, CA

MEGAFORTRESS: This simulation of an advanced B-52 puts the player not only in the pilot's seat, but also the co-pilot's, navigator's, early warning and offensive weapons stations! Managing so much is made easy by the point-and-click interface in the guise of control panels which go a long way toward suspending player disbelief. Missions including training, Desert Storm and *Flight of the Old Dog* (based on the book). Akin to *Harpoon* in that the strategy element often supersedes the simulation element, while the learning curve is not short, *Megafortress* is so compelling to play that the complexity is quite bearable. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #17.

Virgin Games
Irvine, CA 92714

CORPORATION: The biggest corporation in the future world has bioengineered a monster out of *Aliens*, and the government needs a covert operative to find out if this is all true. A player can purchase specific weapons and train for certain skills before entering the maze of the corporation's security systems in search of the embryo from the genetic laboratory. This combination role-playing / action game presents a wide array of items and puzzles which must all be encountered before a successful conclusion can be reached. IBM ($49.99). Circle Reader Service #18. **CGW**

The Rumor Bag

by Jeffrey Eisner



Visiting **Epcot Center** with all of its impressive international pavilions is the next best thing to attending a World's Fair. The good news for me was that I was here on business. I walked up to the VIP window with my bag on my head and told them I was the rumor guy. They didn't buy it. "Anybody can put a bag over his head," they complained. I figured I'd tell them a rumor and prove that I was who I said I was, so I told them that **Westwood Associates** was working on a new role-playing game for **Virgin Games** that uses a first-person perspective a la *Dungeon Master* or *Eye of the Beholder*. The name of the game is *Tyrandhia*. "Anybody can tell us a rumor," responded the fellow in charge of the VIP window.

I thought to myself, "What would convince a corporate loyalist from **Disney** that I was legitimate?" Well, I'd heard of the famous Katzenberg memo. Maybe a memo from a large corporation would do. I showed them a memo I'd lifted off a **Prodigy** staffer that talked about a new game they're offering on-line in 1992. It's called *The Next President* and it lets players all around the country take on the role of local campaign managers for the candidate of their choice. The memo was pretty elaborate. It noted how there would be an on-going poll based on input from all the players involved. In that way, the game would be dynamic and players would have a chance to direct their candidate as to what issues to emphasize, where to make appearances and what kind of appearances to make, etc.

The Disney guy bought my story and gave me a press pass that was good for the rest of the afternoon. I figured that would be sufficient time to check out the international pavilions. It would be a quick trip around the globe for the rumor guy, something like the player would experience in **QQP**'s upcoming *Solitaire's Journey: 1998*. That's the working title for a game that fits 104 different solitaire games together into a quest that sends the player all over the world. It even includes some interesting trivia questions. I told them it sounded like *Where in the Cards is Carmen Sandiego?*, but they didn't think that was any funnier than some of my readers think this column is.

I had no sooner reached the Norwegian pavilion than I became mesmerized by a familiar walk. Now, I would never reveal exactly which beautiful public relations professional was entering the pavilion ahead of me, but you can be sure I was right behind her as she boarded one of the Viking ships which take visitors through the exhibit. She teased me by pretending not to notice me. Then she whispered, "I hear **Virgin** is working on a Norse game." I neither confirmed nor denied her suggestion. "It is supposed to be a quest game in the style of *The Immortal*," she continued, just as we were interrupted by the audio-animatronic visage of a Norse god sending us (at least in the ride) back in time. "I've heard that players have to find Thor's hammer, Odin's crystal and the like. It's supposed to be called *Heimdall*."

I thanked her for the information and asked her if she'd heard that **Ubisoft** had signed Jimmy Connor as a celebrity license for their *Pro Tennis Tour 2* game. She hadn't, but wasn't actually surprised. Our Viking ship reached the apex of the ride and we were immediately thrown forward into a log flume-type waterfall. As we settled into the pool at the bottom of the incline, she said that she felt like she had just been thrown from a catapult.

That reminded me that **QQP** is planning to publish a medieval-style strategy game called *Castles & Catapults*. The chess-like game will support one to three players, feature large maps and be modem capable.

She seemed genuinely interested, but as we disembarked from the Viking ship, she told me that what she really wanted to know was what **Dynamix** happened to be doing. "After all," she fluttered her eyelids seductively, "they didn't hire John Cutter to make coffee in the morning." You cannot possibly imagine how tempted I was to break down and tell her everything I know about the fact that **Dynamix** is planning to start publishing role-playing games and sports games. My male ego desperately wanted to impress her with the name of the science fiction writer that the company was negotiating with in order to place their first role-playing game in "his" universe. I wanted to tell her how the suspension of disbelief with regard to the game world would be enhanced by the way they were using their *3-Space* technology. I thought about what **Dynamix** President Jeff Tunnell would do to me if I told an employee from a rival company. "Maybe," I suggested, "we could go see *Captain EO*. I could tell you about a cyberpunk game. You see, **Trilobyte** is working on a project for **Virgin** called *Cybernet*. It's going to be a CD-ROM game based on cyber reality."

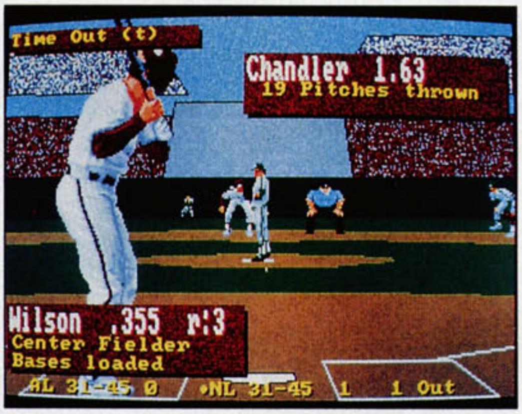
Her eyes sparkled, her teeth gleamed and I knew the temptation had passed. We went to see the 3-D cyberfunk movie and I could still hang onto my secret (at least, that is, until press time). **CGW**


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REAL ACTORS. Our most technically ambitious game ever. Characters video-captured and animated for hard-hitting realism.
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Plus a soundtrack by Miami Vice's Jan Hammer
Almost too real.
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Only 6" long - fits in your glove compartment. Hard plastic body with super-bright krypton bulb.
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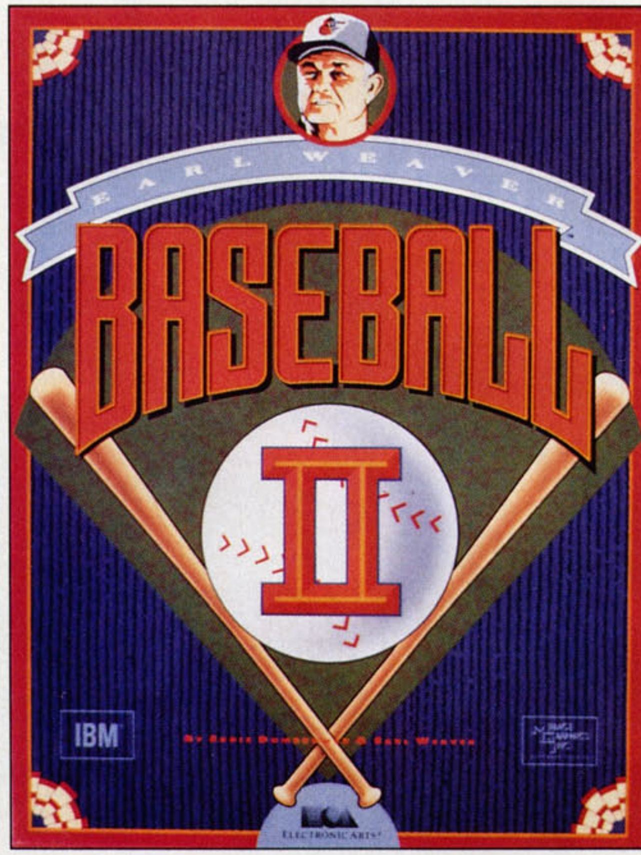
Field of (Weird) Dreams

Electronic Arts' Earl Weaver Baseball II

by Win Rogers







Some cultural landmarks still survive. Nobody, for instance, has yet done *Paradise Lost* in rap, *Citizen Kane* still awaits colorization and Chartres Cathedral has not been covered with aluminum siding.

TITLE:	Earl Weaver Baseball II
SYSTEMS:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	Basic game, $49.95; Commissioner's Disk II, $29.95, 1990 MLBPA Player Stats & Manager Profiles Disk, $19.95. Upgrade from Version 1.5: $49.95 plus $5.00 S/H for all three modules.
COPY PROTECT:	Code Wheel
DESIGNER:	Eddie Dombrower
PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts San Mateo, CA

Earl Weaver Baseball, however, was not so lucky. **Electronic Arts** has put up garish triple-decker grandstands behind the Green Monster at Fenway and along Waveland Avenue behind Wrigley. They uprooted Connie Mack and John McGraw, those canny old Founding Fathers, and switched leagues on them. They turned the 1927 Yankees into a team of hitless patsies. Perhaps worst of all, now the natural rhythms of the game have been drained away and one is forced to play herky-jerky, funhouse-mirror baseball. *This* was worth waiting all summer for?

Playing *Earl Weaver Baseball II* is a field-of-nightmares experience. It is like something cooked up by Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*, who wanted the punishment to fit the crime and the billiard sharp to be forced to play

"On a cloth untrue,
With a twisted cue,
And elliptical billiard balls."

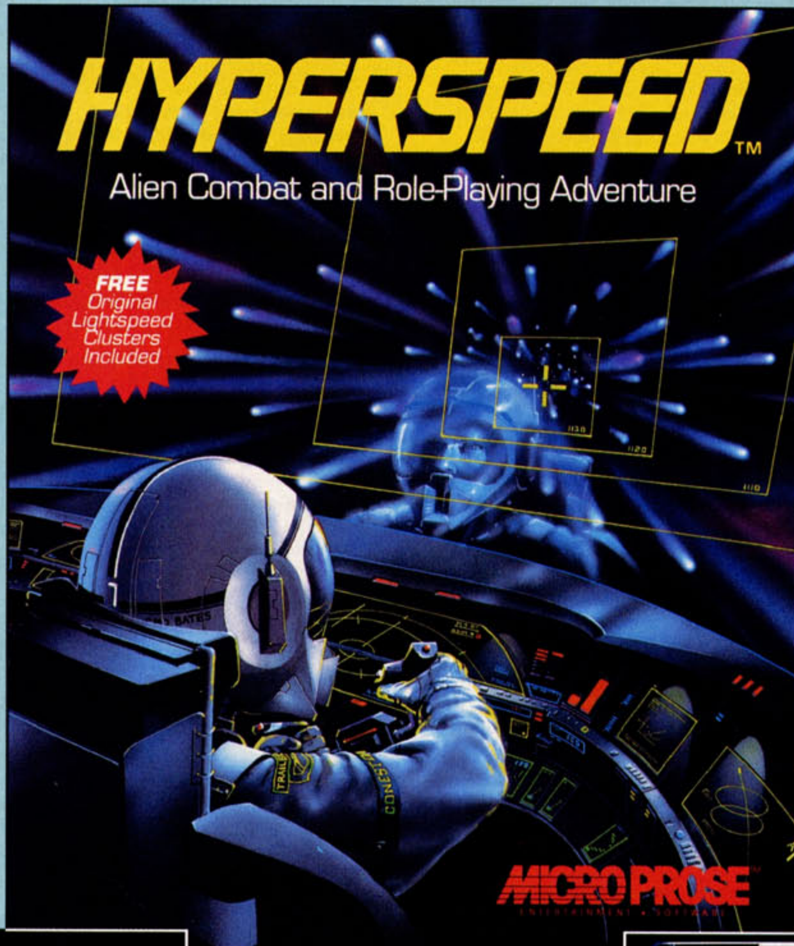
What was the computer baseball lover's crime to deserve this punishment? Where was the "Earl" of Baltimore while this desecration was being carried out?

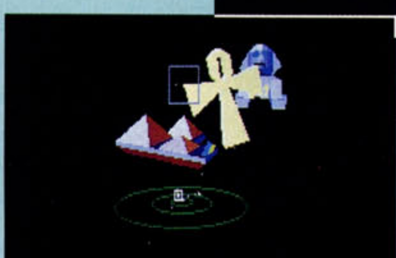
The original 1987 *Earl Weaver Baseball* is a classic that richly deserves its reputation as the best sports simulation ever put on a computer. It went far beyond previous computer baseball games in uniting arcade action with a sophisticated statistical simulation. Its reverence for baseball's past was evident in its statistical recreations of all-star players back to the turn of the century and in its restorations of hallowed, long-destroyed baseball fields for them to play on. Within the limitations of its CGA environment, it had great richness of detail and conveyed the rhythmic flow of the game. No previous computer game had come close to capturing the graceful ballet as a throw comes in to the cutoff man with runners advancing on the basepaths.

The original game treated its users, as well as the very game of baseball itself, with respect. It gave users many choices in configuring the game for play and did not force an either/or choice between arcade and manage-only modes. A father and son could play baseball enjoyably together by letting the old man play an easier arcade mode or letting him simply manage. The program offered excellent utilities for compiling statistics and printing out their results.

Earl Weaver's involvement in the project was no mere celebrity endorsement, either, since his feisty personality, obsession with statistics and tactical flair permeated the game. "Earl" was the computer manager one played against and the little figure who came out to kick dirt on the umpire's shoes on a disputed play. One could always "Ask Earl" when in doubt about a strategy. Watching "Earl" choose and arrange the starting lineup after the opposing team had

"Aliens approaching... fightercraft launched."





IBM-PC screens shown.





There's no room for error when traveling faster than the speed of light, racing through star systems in a desperate search for a new world to house Mankind. But there are plenty of opportunities for mistakes. Alien races of every conceivable size, shape, temperament and sophistication seek to aid, use, corrupt or destroy you — and you don't know which.

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announced its starting pitcher always provided a short, incisive seminar on baseball tactics.

It was certainly time for a new version of *EWB*. The 1989 upgrade (Version 1.5) added some welcome enhancements such as support for faster computers and a partial implementation of 16-color EGA support. But Version 1.5 remained limited by its CGA beginnings. While home and visiting uniform colors could be distinguished in the batter/pitcher closeup window, all players were dressed alike on the basepaths. Annoying bugs in the program made it impossible to call hit-and-run plays against the computer and made "Earl" occasionally forget his bullpen and keep his pinch hitter in the game to pitch. One longed to see how the game of baseball might look and sound in a simulation that took full advantage of today's faster processing speeds, VGA cards and sound boards. More sophisticated algorithms in the ballpark modification utility would make it possible to construct more accurate renditions of eccentrically configured parks like the Los Angeles Coliseum or Toronto's Exhibition Stadium.

Pre-release publicity heightened anticipation about the improvements in Version II. To be sure, there are *some* improvements in *EWB II*, all relating to the statistical underpinnings of the game. Player statistics can be downloaded over modem from the STATS On-Line Services and transferred to the game, thus making it much easier to use current player performance data. Additionally, player statistics can be exported to and imported from Lotus spreadsheets. This feature greatly facilitates data entry and statistical analysis, though no key is provided to indicate the order of the data elements in the spreadsheet. The inclusion of a team representing the Negro Leagues of the pre-Jackie Robinson era is a wonderful symbolic gesture true to the spirit of the original *EWB*. Rosters are now big enough to allow a team to carry a virtually unlimited reserve list, and there is also a separate file for free agents. Finally, the game now automatically assigns default rating points when one is entering player statistics, making the process of adding new players and teams much less mysterious and frustrating than it was previously.

The Commissioner's Disk utilities for replaying simulated seasons have also seen improvement. The program will not only provide standings, league leaders and individual player statistics from replayed seasons, but will also show individual game results, box scores and team-versus-opponents breakdowns. (There may be a bug in this routine, however, since an attempt to interrupt a season partway through the replay froze the program and damaged this reviewer's hard disk directory structure.) There are now two modes of fast-stat replay, so the player has the option of playing simulated games on the basis of their statistics alone or of factoring in the physical characteristics of the playing fields as well.

The most interesting addition to the statistical simulation is the capability, available on the Commissioner's Disk, to simulate the managerial style of various managers of the past and present, and even program in one's own managerial tendencies for the computer to utilize in computer-managed games. This utility must be taken with a grain of salt, however, since it abstracts managerial tendencies from the context of a roster of particular players. It will not work to give a manager who loves to steal to a team that doesn't have the speedsters. The program names Earl Weaver as manager of the American League 1961-75 team but deliberately doesn't provide access to his manager profile, though it would be fun to analyze it. It doesn't provide names of the managers of the 1990 teams, presumably to avoid licensing costs, so one has to translate "St. Louis 1" into Whitey Herzog and "St. Louis 2" into Joe Torre.

EWB II also retains the openness and flexibility that characterized the original. One still has free choice of such elements as ballpark, designated hitter status and degree of difficulty of the play-and-manage mode, and one has more control than before over how the simulation will handle pitching staffs, player injuries and the like.

"World War III Eliminated The Weak... Now The Real Fight Begins."



Actual screen shown.

In the wake of nuclear holocaust not even the strong are guaranteed survival. Staying alive requires resourcefulness as well as might.

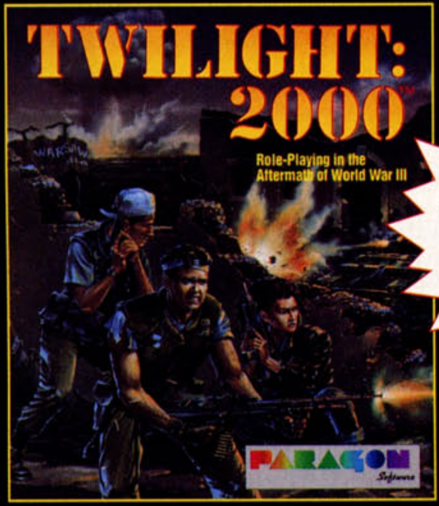
You lead a squadron of 20 highly-trained soldiers who discover World War III isn't over. An insane genius named Baron Czarny has built an army from the dispossessed and armed it with abandoned high-tech weaponry. Now, you must pit your group's diverse skills, and your leadership abilities, against an onslaught of marauders and military madmen determined to win a war the world lost.

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Actual screens may vary.



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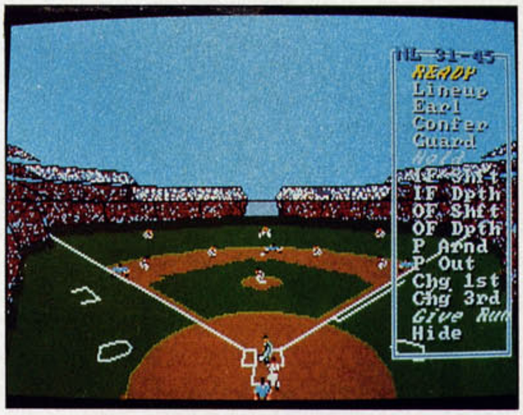
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With all its new, sophisticated statistical tools this would be a wonderful game—if only we didn't have to look at it. The visuals of the game are completely new and very unpleasant. Instead of greater differentiation between ballparks, there is less than in Version 1.5. Cancerous growths of looming grandstands have strangled all of the historic parks, overwhelming their graceful scale and blurring the differences among them. Stands are always packed with a faceless mass drenched in the color of the home team's uniforms. There is no way to avoid looking at these monstrosities even by playing fast-stat recreations, since they are the ever-present background to all menus and are there while fast-stat simulations are being run. Putting the menus on top of these garish backgrounds makes them harder to read and means that many more menus are needed than in Version 1.5. There is no relief in turning to the roster screens, for they, too, sport show-off color that draws attention to itself and detracts from readability. At least it is possible to turn off the elevator music....

For planning late-inning bullpen strategies, Version 1.5 had a wonderful screen showing lineups, bullpens and benches of both teams at the same time. This information is no longer available on a single screen in *EWB II*, and neither can one see two 25-man rosters on the screen at once while making trades, as was possible in Version 1.5.

The action of the game is even worse—an interesting experiment in showing complex animated action that is just not ready for commercial release. The action is mapped on an abstract grid that can be viewed from any angle on the field or in the stands. The computer "director" chooses the sequence of camera angles that best captures the unfolding action, sometimes following the ball, sometimes a runner advancing toward the next base. The director mode can also be turned off to let the player choose a preferred camera angle.

With the director mode on, the action is fragmented by the constant stopping and starting with new camera angles. The animation is far from smooth and continuous. Rather, it is jerky and full of annoying freeze frames. Most of the camera angles have far too great a depth of field for the screen's resolution, so figures in the distance tend to be displayed as little bouncing blobs of color, resembling Smurfs playing volleyball. A further distraction is that credit lines for the software designers can apparently pop up on the screen at any moment(!).



One would hope to be able to relieve this problem by "locking" a camera angle on to "choose a seat in the grandstand" and watch the game without the constant visual assaults. Unfortunately, even the "locked camera" mode is far too busy. It belies its name by switching to a behind-the-plate view for every pitch and showing other camera angles as well. The commands to remove sections of the outfield stands, part of the menu for changing camera angles, looked promising as a way of correcting the game's inaccurate version of Fenway Park. However, the "remove stands" command removed the *wall* as well as the stands behind, leaving nothing but empty space. The "locked camera" feature can also strain the limits of one's hardware, and one may be forced to tinker a bit to avoid ending up with large areas of blank space or the playing field covered by the crowd pattern instead of by grass.

The batter is large, digitized and impressively realistic. However, the aura of realism is shattered since players at different distances from the camera, and even at the same distance, inhabit seemingly different universes. The catcher coming out from behind the plate to field a bunt is only half to two-thirds the size of the batter next to him. Players are shrunk, stretched, squeezed and distorted into odd shapes faster than Alice was in Wonderland as the camera follows them across the field. The EGA mode is less detailed but also mercifully less ambitious which means that some may prefer it to VGA. The program stores the color of each player's skin, but the difference is only visible in VGA.

These complex animated effects also exact a cost. To get the features of the original *EWB* one now has to pay a lot more. Because of the space demands of the animations, many of the capabilities of Version 1.5 are no longer in the basic game but have been moved to the Commissioner's Disk. Without the Commissioner's Disk one cannot add, trade or clone players, make up new teams—even move a player from the active roster to the reserve list. The only printing option left in the basic game is the capability to print a box score at the end of a game. A roster including starting lineup can be saved to a disk file but it cannot be printed out from within *EWB II*. A detailed comparison of features is found in the accompanying "Playoff Matchups" chart.

The stripped-down basic game feels like the prototype for a 16-bit, hand-held machine game, with the more serious elements of the game moved off to the Commissioner's Disk. It is disappointing that a product that made such outstanding use of the computer in the past has denied its heritage in this way.

Most disappointing of all is the feeling that nobody was minding the store while these changes were being implemented. Too many details have been botched that people who care about baseball would have gotten right. The dominant American League and National League managers of the first part of the twentieth century, each indelibly associated with his league's traditions, were Connie Mack and John McGraw. *EWB II* sets one's teeth on edge by giving each the other's league to manage. Didn't anybody notice? The great Yankee manager of the 1931-45 period was Joe McCarthy, and of the 1946-60 period was Casey Stengel. *EWB II* gives each the other's era to manage. Didn't anybody notice? As if running out of inspiration, the game gives Leo Durocher teams in two different eras to manage and gives Charlie Grimm to the Negro Leagues as manager, instead of a black manager whose style would have been quite different from any white manager's of the era.

The game provides a utility to convert previous player disks to *EWB II* format. There were disastrous results when this utility was tested on the "All Time Baseball" disk released by Electronic Arts last year. The converted batters proved so weak that a game between the 1927 Yankees and the 1946 Red Sox—two powerful hitting aggregations, the Red Sox with their usual problematic pitching staff—was scoreless until a run scored as the result of an error in the 45th inning. Because of an apparent bug in the conversion program, none of the great historic teams on this disk has any scoring punch. Again, nobody seems to have noticed until this was brought to their attention by this beleaguered reviewer.

See the accompanying "Playoff Matchups" chart for a more detailed comparison of features. Fans of *EWB* should not upgrade to *EWB II* before seeing the graphics on the new version. They may want to stick with Version 1.5, though Electronic Arts is unlikely to support it with new player disks and bug extermination unless hit with a protest as noisy as the one that brought back Classic Coke. *Tony La Russa's Ultimate Baseball*, reviewed in *CGW #88* and included on the chart, is a strong competitor to *EWB II*. It bears a close family resemblance to *EWB II* on the statistical side and offers VGA graphics that are much more pleasing to the eye. It consumes a large amount of hard disk space and its basic game package does not offer as many playing options as the complete *EWB II* system. It is not known how much its promised Fantasy Manager utility disk will improve things.

We are told that V.I.P. participants at the All-Star Game (press and baseball executives) were very positively impressed with the game. Perhaps *we* (like many baseball fans) are too enamored with the past to see the elegance of *Earl Weaver Baseball II*'s system. We leave it to the *vox populi* to make the final decision (sort of like letting the fans vote on the All-Star line-ups). **CGW**

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WE HOPE YOU'VE DONE YOUR HOMEWORK

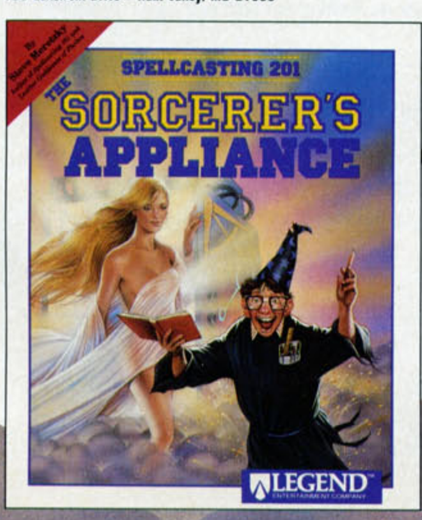
Join Ernie and Eve in this hilarious romp through the bedrooms, turrets, and tunnels of both Sorcerer University and nearby Barmaid U (where grading on a curve takes on a whole new meaning). To pass this course you'll need to cast ridiculous spells, solve ribald puzzles and "interact" with gorgeous women. Any questions? We didn't think so. Class dismissed.

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Interplay's goal, in *Star Trek: The 25th Anniversary Game* (*Star Trek*) is to help round out the five-year mission that was never concluded in the three-year run of the television series. The original concept for the game was to enable the player to experience an entire "season" of adventures which were to be designed, essentially, as television episodes.

Starfleet Command Performance

As of this writing, the game will contain about one-third of a season's worth of television-style episodes (nine) and the player will experience the episodes by guiding the familiar landing party of Kirk, Spock, McCoy and the ever-expendable "red shirt" through the stories. Each "episode" contains anywhere from four locations (in the simplest scenario) to 12 locations in order to unfold a given storyline. Hence, from the time one beams down to a planet to encounter the puzzles, banter and fiction that drives the game, *Star Trek* feels right.

Exploring the "final frontier" involves a universe of trade-offs, however. One begins with instant familiarity with the main characters and their setting, but that very strength brings with it a "parallel universe" of script approval, Trekkie expectations and character limitations. Veteran game designer and novelist Michael Stackpole wrote the original fifteen scripts for the game, but the film studio rejected some of the detailed references to shows in the television series because they felt that certain TV episodes were of lesser quality and untrue to the basic universe. Stackpole had known that he would have to be careful with details and characterizations in the *Star Trek* universe, but must have figured that his experience in writing *Battletech* novels would put him in good stead for developing plots for existing universes. What he could not have expected was for the film studio to decide against plot elements derived from episodes which were already part of the *Star Trek* legend. Eventually, Liz Danforth came in to craft new "episodes" (i.e. mini-quests) to take the place of those which **Paramount** was unable to approve.

She Canna' Take Inna More

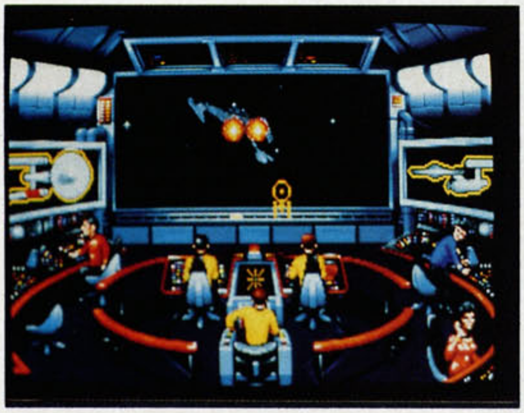
That was not the only "trade-off" to be experienced in designing for the *Star Trek* universe. The design team found themselves confronted with a problem related to starship combat. In the television series, conflict was limited to a couple of orders to the crew on the bridge, a few photon torpedo runs and the actors throwing themselves around the bridge to simulate the *Enterprise* taking hits. This was effective enough for television in the '60s, but it wasn't very entertaining as a game.

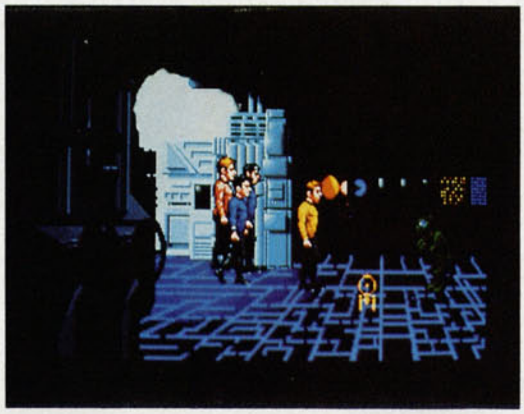
So, the design team elected to have the Enterprise cavorting like a "fighter" in dogfights at sub-light speeds. These action sequences are somewhat reminiscent of *Wing Commander* and should be fairly entertaining to those who enjoy arcade-style sequences, but we can already hear the howls from "Trekkie" purists who, like Scottie, will imagine the stress required for a starship to handle like that and will cry, "Captain, she canna' take inna more!"

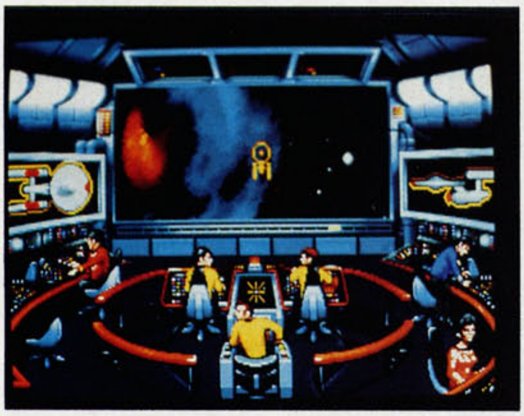
The action sequences themselves serve an admirable purpose in providing tension and drama between "episodes" and they allow the programmers to show off the impressive planetary graphics they have designed, but one wonders if the design decision will not alienate some members of the target audience. Fortunately, the artistic presentation of the rotating planets already looks better than most of the Class M planets orbited by the television version of the Enterprise.

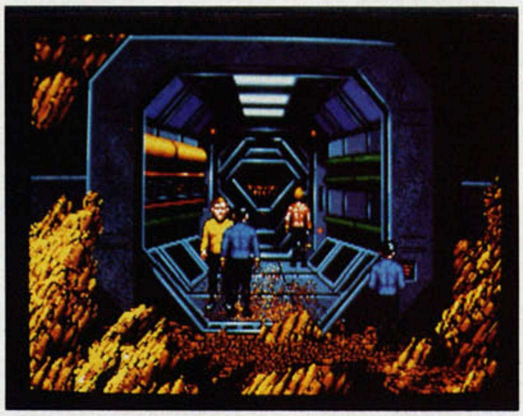
Interplay's Star Trek: The 25th Anniversary Game

by Johnny L. Wilson









"I'm Just a Country Doctor"

Another trade-off in the design is in the non-typing interface. The very intuitive, non-intrusive and effective interface pops up when one clicks on an on-screen character. A humanoid outline is depicted on a window which covers a portion of the selected on-screen character and one simply clicks on the humanoid's hand to "touch" something, its foot to "go" somewhere, a globe it is holding to "use" an item (or, as Captain Kirk, to "command" someone), its eyes to "examine" anything and its mouth to "say" something.

In fact, the command interface is so unobtrusive that many will ask, "What's the trade-off?" The trade-off can be seen in the fact that the *game* is icon- and puzzle-driven while the *series* it is based on was largely *dialogue* driven. The design team has been sensitive to the *dialogue*-driven nature of the universe, however, and has managed to fill the data files with classic lines like: "Dammit, Jim, I'm a doctor, not a miracle worker!" and "He's dead, Jim." Some plots will have to be solved by making menu-driven dialogue choices in sensitive diplomatic negotiations, just as one would expect on TV.

Indeed, the goal of the game is not to hack and slash one's way across the star map. Rather, the emphasis is on thinking one's way out of difficult situations rather than shooting one's way out of them.

If one is successful in resolving the conflicts arising during this "fourth season," the game gives the player a certain number of skill points. These points can be cashed in and used to purchase better skills for party members. These skills, in turn, may determine how successful the player will be in future "episodes."

He's Dead, Jim

One very courageous design decision was allowing the possibility for Captain Kirk to die. Most publishers do not like to put their protagonists at risk and most gamers will not be expecting it to be any more *possible* for Captain Kirk to die than it would be for Luke Skywalker to die. It just isn't done in film and television.

Fortunately, Captain Kirk is not handled capriciously in *Star Trek: The 25th Anniversary Game*. There are warning signals when the player is being too irresponsible. After all, losing the "red shirt" will not exactly endear the good captain to Starfleet Command and it is a warning to the player that he/she may not be approaching a conflict in the right manner (i.e. the "red shirt" will always die before Kirk is endangered). None who watched the original television series ever really believed that Kirk would die. In the game, however, we will have to be more careful as the death of Kirk (as the player's alter ego) ends the game.

It Is Only Logical, Captain

The "episodes" themselves have a very nice variety. In one episode, there is a religious community that seems to be seeing demons behind every bush. In another, a group of pirates have hijacked a tug. Romulan diplomacy serves as the focal point of another episode and Harry Mudd returns in yet another. We were fascinated by the neo-Aztec religion which crops up in two episodes and the return of Kirk's corbomite gambit as something more than a bluff in yet another. The pirates have to be handled something like the "gangster" world in "A Piece of the Action" in an episode near the end. The final epi-sode is still awaiting that necessary script approval from **Paramount**. Suffice it to say that the final confrontation of the adventure should be something very special.

Enterprise, Report

Star Trek: The 25th Anniversary Game is, at once, more successful and more potentially controversial than any of the previous *Star Trek* computer games. Although the stories and characterizations capture the heart of the series with a zest as yet unseen in a computer game, the *Star Trek* universe has engendered such a devout band of purists that one wonders how they will react to the trade-offs necessitated in this new design. Nevertheless, one impression seems clear—*Star Trek: The 25th Anniversary Game* offers both a visual and verbal richness that should seem like warp speed compared to earlier *Star Trek* products. **CGW**

"Let There Be Barton Creek!"

The Creation of a Links Course Disk

by Russell Sipe

BARTON CREEK
COUNTRY CLUB



The green on the par-4 16th requires a very accurate approach shot. A creek and waterfall runs across the fairway just in front of the green. Except as noted, photos in this article are of the Barton Creek Fazio course.

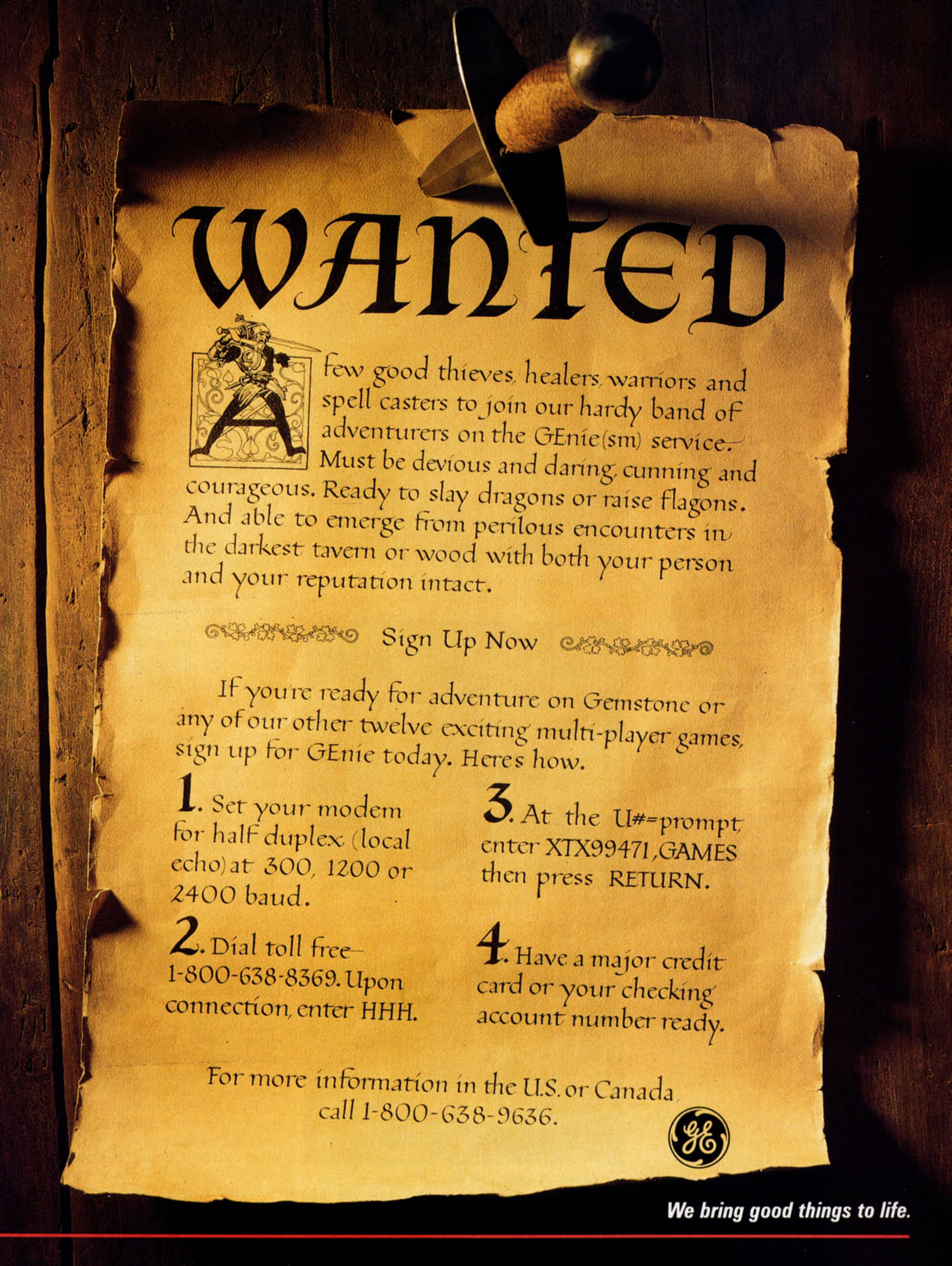


Zeke McCabe photographs a tree while marketing director Steve Wetzel looks on.

As these words are being written, the PGA is gearing up for the prestigious PGA Tour® Championship, in which the top 30 money winners, plus all tourney winners of the year, compete for the largest purse in golf ($2 million). This writer is looking forward to the tournament because he has played the course on which it is to be held many times: Pinehurst #2 in Pinehurst, North Carolina. This stately course is considered by pros and course designers alike as being among the very best courses in the world.

The truth is that this writer has never physically been to North Carolina. All those rounds of golf at Pinehurst #2 were played on **Access Software**'s *Links*, using their latest course disk (which just happens to be Pinehurst #2). The detailed courses, rendered in full VGA graphics by the *Links* design team, are easily the best products on the market in terms of giving you the feel that you are really "there." *CGW* was impressed enough with the results that we gave *Links* our coveted **Action Game of the Year** award in 1991.

Recently *CGW* was invited by Access Software to observe the creation of an upcoming "course disk," Barton Creek Country Club in Austin, Texas. Barton Creek has two championship courses. The Fazio Course (designed by renowned course designer Tom Fazio) is the site of the Senior PGA Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf Tournament. Beautiful, but treacherous, it will make a great *Links* course. Also at Barton Creek is the Ben Crenshaw course, designed by Ben


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Crenshaw and Bill Coore. Access Software is going to digitize both courses. The Fazio course will be released as a regular course available through their normal distribution. The Crenshaw course will likely be a bonus course offered at a low price to *Links* owners who send in their warranty cards.

The Crenshaw course reflects Ben Crenshaw's philosophy that a golf course should stress strategy. The fairways are wide and the greens are big. That is not to say that the course is easy. To score well on the Crenshaw course, you must plan each shot well. A mediocre to average drive on some holes may leave you in the fairway, but 100 yards further from the pin than a strategically executed drive. Unlike the Fazio Course, there are many ways to approach each hole. This is the style of golf preferred by European pros.

The Fazio course, on the other hand, follows a different philosophy. Some call it the "fly it in" style. Fairways are narrower. Hazards force players to hit accurate drives. Greens are well guarded, often requiring the player to "fly" the ball into the green rather than running shots up onto the green (see the photo of the 16th green for a perfect example).

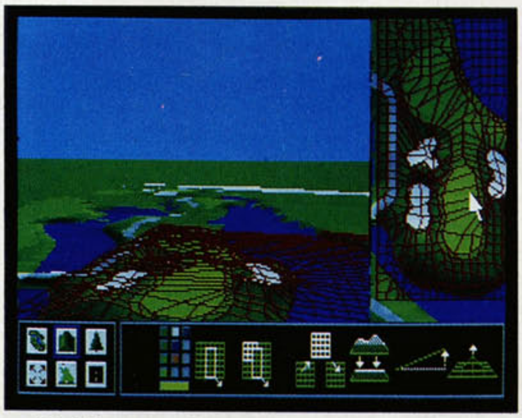
There are four basic inputs the *Links* team uses to design each course: topographical maps, aerial photographs of each hole, videotape of each hole shot from the player's perspective, and still photos of a wide variety of objects and shapes on the course. These various sources of information are used by the team to design each course on their proprietary Course Architect software. The Course Architect includes a CAD-style program used to create the grid and place objects. This program allows them to input the rough topographical data to get their starting grid, modify the grid based on the various photographic records, and position all manner of objects around the course. The Course Architect includes a bit-map editor with which trees, buildings, and other objects can be created and sized. As of this writing, there is a *chance* that Access may make available a commercial version of the course editor. We hope they decide to do so. If you'd like to see a *Links* course editor, we suggest you write them a letter.

The design of a *Links* course can be summarized in four steps.

Step 1: Information from the topographical maps is input into the Course Architect. This creates a "rough edit" course. (Unfortunately, topographical maps of golf courses vary in their availability and detail). Each "grid" point on the computer map is assigned an elevation.



John Bervan videotaping the first fairway. The clubhouse is in the background.



Working on a Dorado Beach hole with the Course Architect.



Zeke gets a low-angle shot of the green. Topo maps, video and stills will be used to get the slopes right.

Step 2: A helicopter flies the length of the course and an aerial survey of each hole is created. The aerials are used to document an accurate top-down view. (Actually, they fly somewhat to the side of the hole so as to get some sense of height from the terrain.) The team tries to arrange the aerial work in the late afternoon so as to have shadows (which give additional topographical information). At the computer, they view the photos and modify the grid to fit the aerials. Shapes of greens, bunkers and tee boxes are all conformed to the aerials. Such things as the exact course of cart paths and locations of structures are confirmed.

Step 3: They videotape the entire course from ground level. They use the tape (still frames) to view every angle and slope on the course (perspective views), then modify the grid accordingly. On-course objects are more accurately positioned, based on information in the video. The team uses an S-VHS system, which allows them to view crisp, clear still frames for course editing purposes.

Step 4: Still photos of the course are taken. Typically, Access will take some 600 still shots for each course. The still photos concentrate on objects (trees, on-course items such as ball washers, buildings on the course or in the panorama, etc.). Every type of tree encountered on the course is digitized. (Often, several examples of the same tree type are digitized, giving the team a selection to choose from when placing individual trees on the course.) The Course Architect allows the team to size the trees and, in turn, accomplishes two purposes: providing a sense of depth or (depending upon location of the tree in question) allowing one digitized tree to be perceived by the player as different (i.e. non-identical) trees.

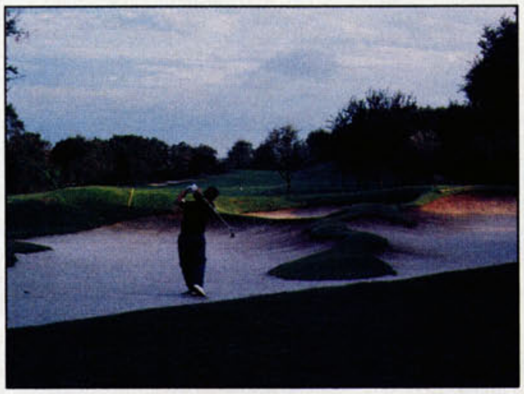
The background panoramas are created from a series of cells which "surround" the database. Depending on your location on the course and the direction you are facing, the program calls up the appropriate cells that form the backdrop of the view. Barton Creek will contain a number of luxury homes on the hillsides beyond the course boundaries. These homes will be digitized, set into the background cells *and scaled*. The closer you are to an object in the background cell, the larger that object will appear.



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There are currently five courses available for play with *Links*: Torrey Pines (which comes with the program); Pinehurst, Bay Hill, Firestone, and Bountiful. With the exception of Bountiful, each of these courses has been the site of a major tournament. One thing the Access folks look for in their course selection is variety. There is a wide range of golf architecture in the five current courses. This quest for variety will continue with future disks.

The two most requested courses from *Links* customers are Augusta National and Pebble Beach. To date, no one has obtained the rights to do Augusta in a computer golf game. Accolade did Augusta for their *Mean 18* game but got in some hot water over it. As a matter of clarification, it should be noted that due to the detailed nature of *Links* disks, the design team must actually go to the course and do their detailed photography. This, of course, involves working closely with course management. Access is attempting to gain permission from both Augusta and Pebble Beach to do a course disk, but management at the two courses has not yet responded positively.



The author hits out of a fairway trap.

Upcoming courses that *have* agreed to become part of the *Links* course disk library are Dorado Beach, FL; Mauna Kea, HI; and Harbor Town, SC (Hilton Head). Access Software is in various stages of discussion with some half dozen other courses as well.

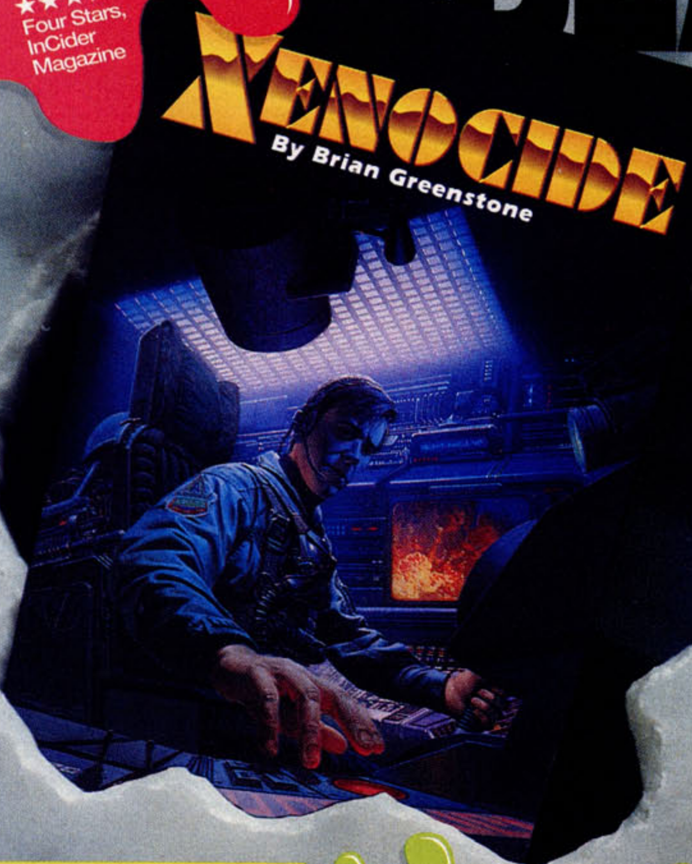
Zeke McCabe (there is a name straight out of a Zane Gray novel) and John Bervan are the two principal men responsible for the course disks. Zeke is a professional photographer and a passionate fan of golf. Not only does he shoot the stills and the aerials for the course disks, he is responsible for course acquisition and plays the heck out of each course disk to make sure it plays like the real course. In that capacity he goes to dozens of exclusive country clubs, where he enjoys the hospitality of the club and numerous rounds of golf, at no cost to himself. (It's a dirty job, but someone has to do it.) John shoots the video, plays the courses with Zeke (just so Zeke doesn't think he is the only one making a sacrifice for the company), and works intensely with the Course Architect software, along with Mark MacArthur, Mark Carver, Chris Carver, Jim Slade, and Bruce Carver. Typically, Zeke and John will spend up to a week at the course gathering the photographs and playing the course. It takes about three months for the *Links* team to produce a course disk.

Well, it's time to get back out on the course.... [Sound of swing] Whack!... Thunk!... "It looks like I hit a tree, Jim." CGW

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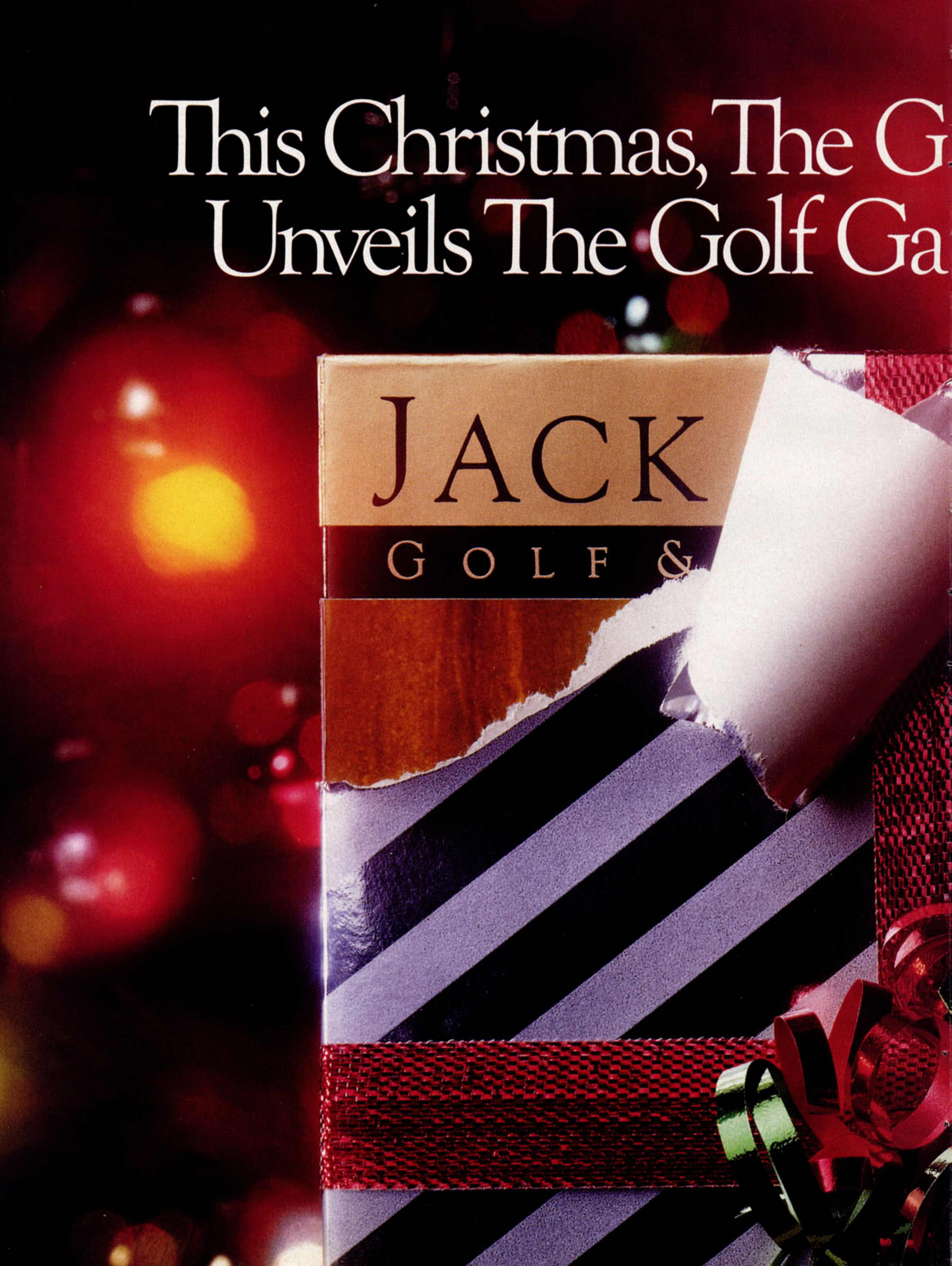
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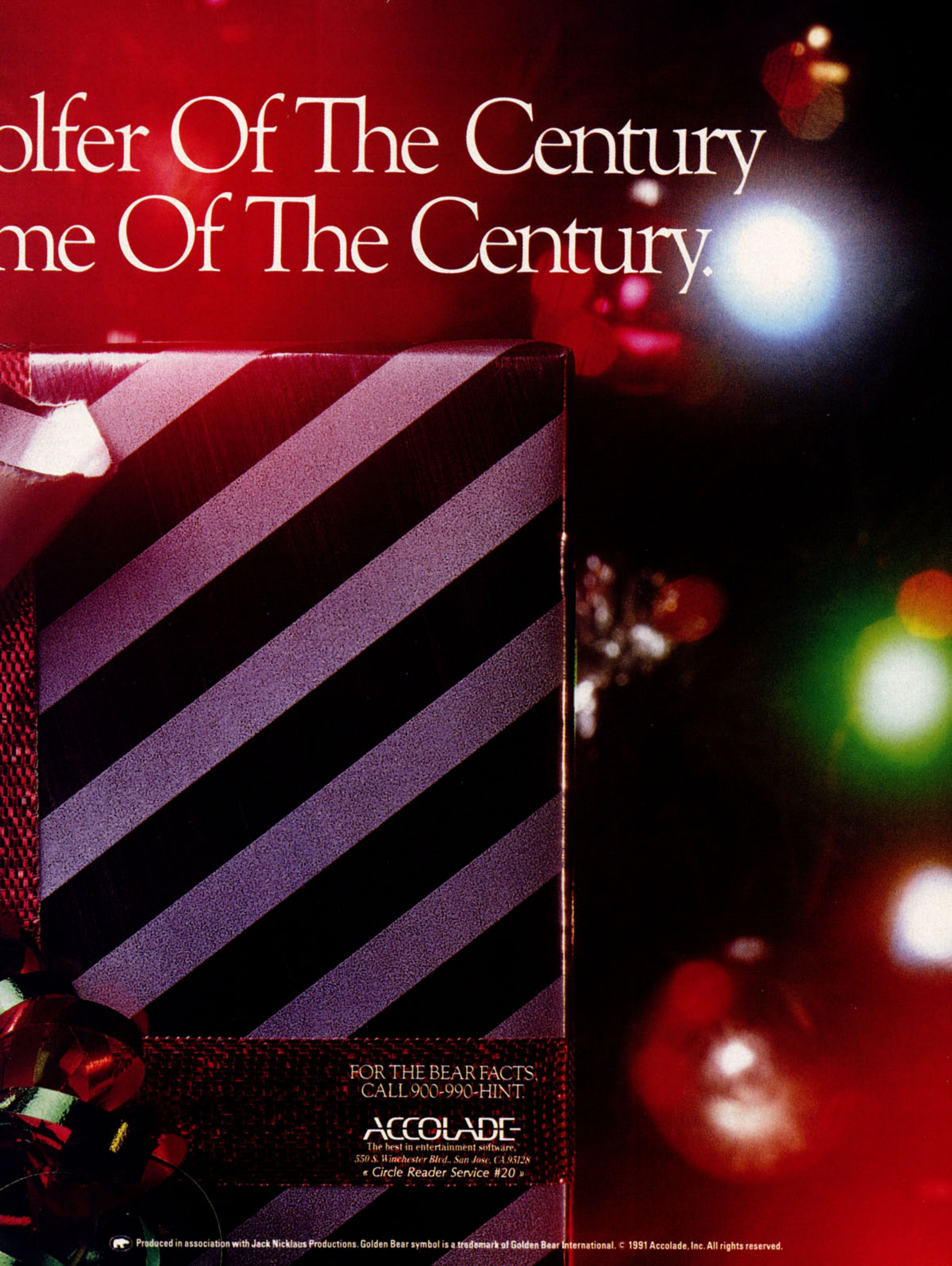
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Flaming Arrows of the "Apache"

Microprose's Gunship 2000

by Bryan A. Walker

TITLE:	Gunship 2000
SYSTEM:	PC (80286 10 MHz or higher recommended) VGA, Ad-Lib, Roland cards supported 640k required
COPY PROTECTION:	Document Look-Up
PRICE:	$69.95
DESIGNERS:	James M. Day, Darrell Dennies, and Detmar Peterke
PUBLISHER:	Microprose Software Hunt Valley, Maryland

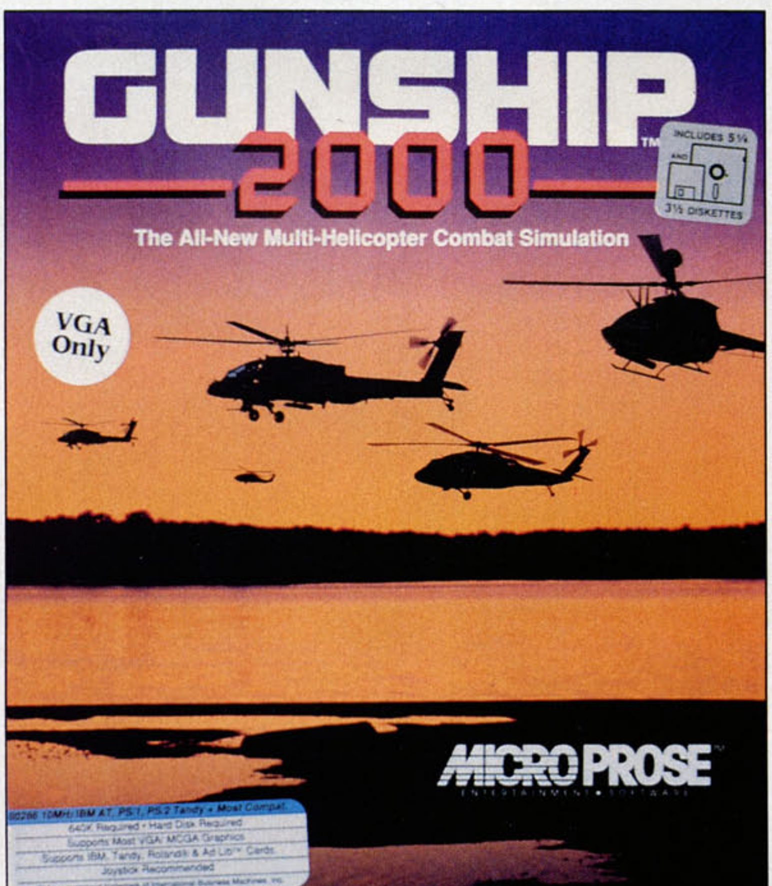


The author has been an avid computer gamer since the introduction of the TRS-80. He is currently stationed in Germany as an AH-64 Apache pilot for the U.S. Army and saw action in Operation Desert Storm. Views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense or the United States government.

Hot on the heels of the stunning success America's attack helicopters enjoyed in Desert Storm, **Microprose** has released *Gunship 2000*, touting it as the most realistic helicopter simulator game ever. Improving on the original *Gunship*, *Gunship 2000* adds VGA graphics with Ad-Lib and Roland sound support. The player can fly AH-6G, OH-58D, AH-1W, UH-60, AH-64, AH-66, and Longbow Apache helicopters. Taking realism a step further, the player can command a flight of up to five helicopters of three different types simultaneously, each equipped with the latest weapons. Single-ship, multi-ship, and campaign missions are now available, whether over Europe or the Persian Gulf.

If Pigs Could Fly (Critical Remarks)

Now, the truth is that an AH-64 can perform hair-raising maneuvers in reality, but flies like an overloaded Huey in *Gunship 2000*. In this game, helicopters fly like pigs—plain and simple. The player will be lucky to coax a 60-degree bank from the game's helicopters without crashing. When nosed over into a dive, the choppers accelerate much faster than they should, but if a computer pilot should attempt a "cyclic climb," the airspeed bleeds off so fast this reviewer expected to hear screeching rubber. This inaccuracy is aggravated by the game's control system. The tail rotor pedals have been incorporated into the joystick, which helps. Unfortunately, the "+" and "-" keys control the collective. Players may find this arrangement difficult. With the frequent requirement for rapid collective applications, it is unfortunate that the designers did not incorporate a mouse or second joystick option into the controls. The adjustable Auto Pilot and Auto Hover features, while not perfect, will be lifesavers to beginning players.



In addition, the graphics are *good*, but don't challenge today's "state of the art." Still, terrain features are realistic and very functional, such that hugging the ground and weaving through valleys pays off with visual enjoyment and aircraft survivability. Unfortunately, the terrain models of the two different regions are distinguishable only by brown ground and palm trees, with the billowing dust clouds helicopters faced in the Gulf conspicuously absent. Also, while occasional ship-borne missions may provide an interesting change of pace, seasoned players may find the aircraft models to be chunky and uninspired. This reviewer also felt that marauding Mi-24s resembled flying piggy banks.

While there is plenty of chrome with the ten optional "camera" views of the action (available during missions), the lack of visible ground texture is a significant hindrance in judging altitude without using the HUD. The ground looks the same at 50 feet or 250 feet. This discrepancy, combined with the collective control arrangement mentioned earlier, can make fighting at very low altitudes tough. The least realistic effect involves the "night mission" graphics, which are simply subdued renditions of the daytime versions. This is a far cry from the infra-red and image-intensified environment that is to be found in actual night helicopter operations.

This reviewer found himself annoyed by the lack of individuality which the game's helicopters suffer. *Gunship 2000* gives the player the capabilities of "showroom" models that aren't really in service. For instance, the AH-1W lacks a FLIR targeting system and night-attack capability; production Apaches can't fire TOW missiles and Army Blackhawks would require extensive modifications in order to fire Hellfire missiles autonomously. Note that aerodynamic performance between the different helicopters is indistinguishable, since the only differences between helicopters in the game are a few different usable weapons and ordnance loads. Hence, much of the diversity of helicopter warfare is lost.

The avionics packages presented in the game are also too generic. Moving-map displays, while present in no real production bird, do make game play much easier. In reality, the APR-39 is simply a radar-warning receiver. The game's APR-39 acts more like a 360-degree scanner, showing all sorts of targets. This isn't realistic, but does improve situational awareness. The unique Mast Mounted Sight of the OH-58D is the only aircraft-unique feature reproduced in the game.

Further, while airstrikes and fire support are advertised, this reviewer never encountered them, even after completing over 100 missions. Microprose representatives stated that these features are present, but random. While encounters with enemy helicopters aren't uncommon, combat against jets is realistically rare.



The campaign game allows the player to lead four other pilots in a multi-mission foray in either Europe or the Persian Gulf. This feature could have been a strong point, but the mission sequence lacks any true continuity. A successful mission pushes the red on the briefing map back. A failed mission results in the red creeping forward. The bad guys are anonymous, and the "big picture" is never fully painted. The camaraderie of men at war is barely addressed.

A final quibble can be made with the soundtrack. While the major sound cards are supported, the effects presented are sub-standard. The throaty stutter of the Apache's 30mm cannon and supersonic tear of a rocket salvo are sorely missed. The insipid "thip-thip-thip" used to simulate the main rotors hardly does justice to the visceral din that a 3000+ horsepower helicopter actually produces. Fortunately, however, except for the horrid opening score, the musical fanfares are well-rendered.

Passing Inspection (Positive Strokes)

The wide selection of weapons is a strong point. While the flight times and trajectories of the missiles are generic, their ranges and effects are consistent with unclassified data. Fire-and-forget weapons such as the MMW Hellfire and Maverick are simulated well. Unfortunately, the single-minded targeting system used in the game prevents the laser-guided weapons from being used to best effect.

Perhaps the most interesting portion of the game concerns multi-ship missions where different helicopters can be employed in meeting the requirements of various situations. For example, a Search-and-Rescue mission requires a Blackhawk, where an all-out attack might call for Apaches. In addition, it is possible to divide one's five birds into a "heavy" team and "light" team. Perhaps the player could choose to fly a Longbow Apache escorting Blackhawks on a troop extraction mission, while two Comanches simultaneously destroy a mobile Scud site. The latter presents the player an especially vivid perception of what it means to send men off to possible death as the computer provides a cinematic sequence where the player watches the "other" team fly off into the horizon on a mission. The only disappointment here is that a mission editor is not included with the game, an unfortunate omission.

It seems almost redundant to compliment a **Microprose** simulation on the manual, but the documentation to *Gunship 2000* is no exception to the fine tradition. Novice players, in particular, will appreciate the well-illustrated manual with its helpful explanations of rotary-wing aerodynamics and tactics, as well as its informative historical section.

Fire and Forget (Gameplay)

The pre-flight option screens are colorful and present an impressive number of options. Players not only opt for single ship or multi-ship missions, but they get a chance to configure the helicopter's weapons and fuel status for maximum effectiveness, as well. They can also adjust the difficulty setting of features including Flight Realism, Visibility, Terrain Avoidance, Enemy Troop Quality and CP/G (Copilot/Gunner) responsibilities.

One of the most interesting player-adjustable features, the CP/G can be instructed to independently employ the weapons and countermeasures (the most realistic option), just the countermeasures, or simply call out targets. The easiest possible settings are recommended for the first several missions.

Realistic tactics, relying on hovering fire from behind terrain masking, are very effective, but very difficult to employ in this game. If the player can't precisely hover while allowing the CPG to fire the weapons, the enemy air defense will settle the argument. The requirement for precision is frustrated by the constant and unrealistic toggling of the radar and IR jammers the player must perform. The Longbow Apache, with the ability to carry 16 "fire-and-forget" MMW Hellfire missiles, is the game's best choice for these tactics.

Finally, at the end of a mission, the Replay Screen appears. This "VCR" function allows the player to view previous missions from any of the helicopter's vantage point. The views are limited to the player's own cockpit, or a 360-degree exterior view of a selected helicopter. Some viewpoint manipulation can produce very dramatic scenes. The mission can be entered at any point in the tape, but the altered tape can't be saved. While functional, the Replay is not nearly as polished as those of *Red Baron* or *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*.

Performance Evaluation

Gunship 2000 has some thorns. Each strength is counterbalanced by a weakness and the steep learning curve will frustrate those spoiled by the commonplace "boot and shoot" simulator games. Players who will enjoy this game most are the ones with patience, sure hands, and a true passion for destruction. While the exhilaration of tree-skimming helicopter combat can't be reproduced on any PC, the designers have succeeded in creating the best helicopter simulator game currently available, thorns included. **CGW**

At the Trading Deadline

Franchise Football League: Fantasy Football

by Wyatt Lee and J.D. Lambright

TITLE:	Franchise Football League: Fantasy Football
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$34.95
DESIGNERS:	Space Tech Enterprises
PUBLISHER:	Space Tech Enterprises P.O. Box 9805 McLean, VA

For all the disgruntled fans who have ever heard the news of a trade and exclaimed, "An imbecile could be a better general manager than *that* moron!" and every fan who has wanted an excuse to pore over those Monday morning box scores with the dedication of a forensic accountant, there is a new software program designed especially for them. For everyone who has tried to be commissioner for a fantasy league, but got bogged down with all that record-keeping, *Franchise Football League: Fantasy Football* (*FFL*) is a program that has arrived at the right time. *FFL* is a database for setting up, managing and running one's own fantasy football league.

Opening Kickoff

To start, one must decide how many teams (from one to sixteen) will be in the league. If there are more potential owners than this, it may be necessary to have some of the teams co-owned or to set up more than one league (in different directories, of course). Since "fantasy" teams are usually an amalgam of the best players from numerous teams and not equivalent to actual NFL teams, most fantasy league owners select customized names for their teams.

Then, prior to starting the draft, the team owners must make some important decisions about the league structure. The league can be set to the default parameters for scoring or one can input a customized scoring system. The default is well-structured and easily understandable, so those who are running a league for the first time will probably want to stick with it. Next, one must decide on how many players to draft. Each team will need four quarterbacks, six running backs, six wide receivers, two tight ends, two kickers, two special teams players, two linebackers and two defensive backs.

If, however, the team owners are made up of more casual fans, the process may be simplified (and the draft made more efficient) by allowing owners to substitute the whole defense from one NFL team rather than taking the time to draft individual defensive players. The default is for 28 players, but leagues who opt to draft the whole defense of one team can streamline this to 22 players on each roster. One must be careful if the league opts for the latter option, however. This will mean that the scoring for one's special teams, as well as the scoring by the defense, is included in the choice of the defensive team.

Further, as in any other kind of fantasy, boardgame or computer game sports league, league rules for draft deadlines, trading, waivers and roster deadlines should all be adopted *before* the draft. This will avoid much frustration if the league is not only to survive its first season, but continue for several seasons of NFL action.

First and Ten

After setting the date for the draft, deciding on the league scoring system and all the other required decisions, the league is ready to commence. If the owners can meet where the commissioner has access to a computer during the course of the draft, the program will greatly facilitate the administration of the draft. It can be set to administer straight drafts, alternating drafts or reverse number drafts. If the draft should need to be held at a central location where there is no computer, it can still be accomplished without a computer and the results entered at a later time.

Drafting is very simple. All players available during the 1990 season are on the data disk. These may be printed out so that all owners have a reference copy for cross-checking. If a desired player did not play during the 1990 season, there is an option for adding players.

After the draft, the hard part is inputting the data for the scoring system each week. Never fear, there are four options for acquiring data, each with its corresponding price. One may receive the necessary statistics by fax, Federal Express, modem or the local sports page. The fax runs $6.95/week for the 17 weeks of the season. Federal Express is $13.95/week but comes on disk and can be transferred directly into the stat files. Modem access is $3.95/week and also can be transferred directly into the stat files. Purchasing the local or national sports paper varies depending on one's choice.

Scoring is based, of course, on the performances of one's starting roster players for that week. A run of 0-9 yards nets 6 points, while a run of 40+ yards gains 12 points (using the default parameters). All players who score and were started receive points. These points are added with other player points to determine which fantasy franchise won for that week. Naturally, points are cumulative over the course of the season.

Weekly reports, which can be generated as hard copy or simply viewed on-screen, include weekly standings, starting player roster, non-starter roster, players on the injured reserve/waiver list, starting team worksheets, franchise rosters, available players remaining in the pool, graphs of weekly standings and graphs of season standing.

Personal Fouls

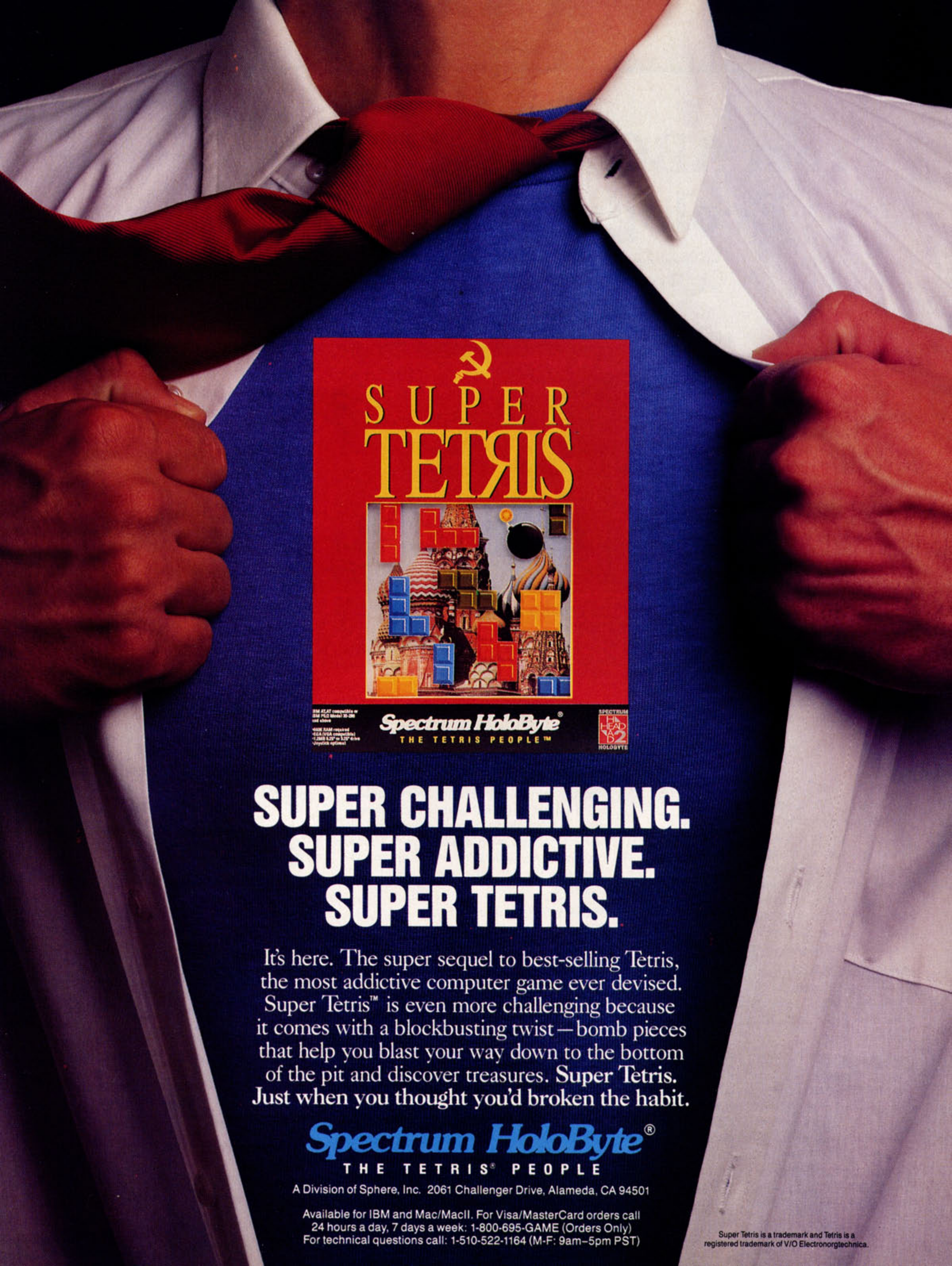
The primary drawback to the program is that it tends to put overweighted emphasis on the quarterbacks and the kickers. Quarterbacks score twelve points for a one-yard run, while a running back must run 40+ yards to score the same number of points. There are no negative points. If a quarterback is sacked in the endzone, the defensive team is awarded 12 points. The quarterback is not penalized! In addition, the quarterback receives points for almost all scoring plays in which he is involved.

Kickers receive points for PATs and field goals. For a 40- to 49-yard field goal, the kicker receives five points. For a 50+ yard field goal he receives ten points. With the expertise of kickers nowadays, a 40+ yard field goal is commonplace and 50+ yarders happen almost weekly.

Touchdown

In spite of the weight given to quarterbacks and kickers, *Franchise Football League: Fantasy Football* has just about everything one could want in a fantasy football league program. It facilitates the massive amount of bookkeeping required to keep a league going and will allow many more football fans to enjoy the weekly performances of their favorite *players*, even if their favorite *team* goes down in defeat. CGW

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From ABCs and 123s to Global Ecology and Microchips

A Survey of Educational Software

by Caitlin Ackelson

There is a virtual world of learning tools available to students with access to a personal computer. In this way, the children of *CGW* readers are extremely fortunate to have such great potential resources within their reach. As a part of our continuing coverage of educational software packages, the following is a survey of educational games received in the last few months.

These products are listed in subject group order by the game's title, manufacturer, machines on which it can be played, recommended age range, suggested retail price and a brief description. Evaluations are based on educational value, entertainment value, ease of play (which includes set-up time and learning curve), imaginative scope and this reviewer's unabashed personal bias.

Letters, Reading, Language

Reader Rabbit 2
The Learning Company
DOS
ages 5-8
$59.95

This is an entertaining language game with sophisticated, attractive graphics and a keyboard interface that allows players to practice such concepts as vowel sounds, rhyming, compound words and alphabetical order. There are lots of cute, fluff-tailed animals accompanying the player and dancing happily to the peppy, computerized soundtrack. Adult help may be needed at first to help read the on-screen instructions.

Grammar Examiner
Britannica Software
DOS, Apple II, Commodore 64
ages 11-14
$29.95

In what could be called "SimCopy-Editor," players practice grammar, proofreading, punctuation and capitalization skills as reporters for the *Grammar Examiner* newspaper. A storyline about the player's progressing career (from novice reporter to editor-in-chief) accompanies an excellent exercise in English grammar and composition. A must for young, aspiring journalists everywhere.



The Milliken StoryTeller
Milliken
DOS, Apple II
ages 3-8
$49.95

In a program designed to help develop reading comprehension skills, a digitized human voice (which supports all major sound cards *plus* the internal speaker) tells such stories as *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Ugly Duckling* and *Henny Penny*, with the option of having each word underlined as it is spoken, to help players read along. Selected screens can also be printed, with a package of four crayons (red, yellow, blue and green) included in the box for players' coloring pleasure.

Marvin the Moose
Milliken
DOS
ages 3-8
$49.95

This package does *The Milliken StoryTeller* one better by including not only stories read aloud to assist with reading comprehension, but also by delving into relationships between characters and approaching concepts in social skills. Players can also write their own stories via an icon interface and print out and color scenes from the game. Sweet-tempered characters and charming graphics create the prevalent atmosphere.

The Berenstain Bears Learn About Letters
Britannica Software
DOS
ages 3-7
$39.95

Beautiful graphics punctuate this beginner-level program that lets kids do just what the title indicates—learn about letters. The Berenstain Bears skate through a lush forest setting and introduce such topics as letter identification, upper and lower case letters and alphabetical order. Known for their humor, the Berenstain Bears are an excellent conduit for this kind of exercise and make a fine contribution to the "A is for apple" tradition.

Joshua's Reading Machine
Compu-Teach
DOS, Apple II, IIgs, Macintosh
ages 4-6
$49.95

Joshua Giraffe guides players through selections from children's literature, such as Mother Goose rhymes, songs like "The Farmer in the Dell" and Aesop's Fables, as they practice spelling and beginner-level reading. Easy to learn, the program consists of nine different games. Exercises like Picture Dictionary help players learn to associate an on-screen picture with its corresponding word.

Joshua's Tinker Tales
Compu-Teach
DOS, Apple II, IIgs, Macintosh
ages 5-7
$49.95

An interactive program, *Tales* allows players a chance to direct the characters in a story, then observe the consequences of their decisions. This "What should happen next?" feature allows players to make predictions about their expected outcomes and see the results of their choices. Allowing players to choose where the stories will go each step of the way, it serves as an engrossing and entertaining approach to reading comprehension skills.

Compound Subjects

Cotton Tales
Mindplay
DOS, Apple, Macintosh
ages 4-8
$49.99

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ARTWORK BY LARRY ELMORE

It's never too soon to learn word processing and this program proves it. By allowing very young players to use the interactive picture menus, it simplifies creative writing and beginning desktop publishing concepts. For players who are just learning to read and write, this program provides an opportunity to express themselves with both words and pictures on a computer.

Easy Street
Mindplay
DOS, Apple IIgs
ages 4-8
$49.99

Players take a shopping trip down *Easy Street* while learning and practicing counting, mnemonic and problem-solving skills. While following a shopping list and staying within an allotted budget, players use classification, labeling and matching skills to shop and purchase. This award-winning program has been recently updated with MCGA/VGA graphics, new characters and colorful backgrounds to make for an even more entertaining game.

My First Computer Book
Workman Publishing
DOS, Apple II
ages 4-7
$17.95

Bialosky Bear leads kids through bits, bytes and all the basics in this charming introduction to computer literacy, which also includes a floppy disk called *My First Software*. Practical and easy to use, this software package and accompanying text provide an engrossing, point-and-click journey through the world of computers. Adults be warned: there's a lot to learn here for computer novices of *any* age.

Eco-Saurus
First Byte
DOS
ages 4-9
$39.95

This interactive game fills basic reading lessons with adventure, dinosaurs and information about the Earth's ecology. The player leads Zug the Megasaurus on a mission to clean up the environment by gathering garbage, conserving resources and recycling. With its point-and-click exploration interface, the game is simple to play and informative in addition to being noble in its purpose.

Stepping Stones
Compu-Teach
DOS, Apple II, Macintosh
ages 2-7
$49.95

A true plethora of material is included in these reading, math and language exercises. Two completely distinct skill levels are available in each subject for a broad range of coverage. Each concept is approached from many different angles. For example, one exercise has the player first select a letter and see a corresponding animation; then the player views a graphic and must type in the first letter of the picture viewed; finally, an on-screen image appears and hangman-style blanks can be typed in to spell out the word in question. Graphics and sound are somewhat limited, but concepts are addressed very thoroughly and thoughtfully.

Headline Harry and the Great Paper Race
Davidson
DOS
ages 10+
$59.95

The player starts out as a cub reporter for the *U.S. Daily Star* and works his or her way up to star reporter by doing research, conducting interviews and filing news stories from a variety of locales throughout the United States. News is based on U.S. political and cultural history circa 1950 to 1990. Players utilize fact-finding and resource-gathering skills while being exposed to a broad spectrum of facts from U.S. history. Funny, imaginative and extremely engaging, this program is a newsworthy "scoop" in educational software.



Easy as 1 2 3

The Berenstain Bears Learn About Counting
Britannica Software
DOS
ages 4-7
$24.95

The cuddly Berenstain Bears make another appearance to help players practice counting, number comparison, simple addition and subtraction as well as measuring height and weight. All the player needs to know are the numbers from one to nine—the program will guide him or her along through the rest. Excellent for very young players, the program allows plenty of time to figure things out and is very forgiving of incorrect answers, with a chirpy little voice admonishing the player to "Try again!" and "Don't give up!"

Math Maze
Britannica Software
DOS, Apple II, Commodore 64
ages 6-10
$29.95

A colorful maze game exposes players to addition, subtraction, multiplication or division with graded levels of difficulty. For instance, a given game can be played with a choice of sums up to 10, sums up to 20 or mental math. Then, to progress through the maze, the player must solve the math problems as he or she encounters them. With a variety of mazes and skill levels, arcade-style action may actually fool kids into thinking they're *not* learning math.

What's My Angle: Geometry
Davidson
DOS
ages 14+
$49.95

Here is the program that answers the question that goes through the mind of every high school geometry student at one time or another: "Will I ever use this stuff in real life?" Five different activities address basic concepts and—yes—real-world applications of geometry. It even includes GeoGolf, a miniature golf game that emphasizes the importance of angles. This software could be of tremendous value as a supplement for a student currently studying geometry in school.

The Math Zone
Milliken
DOS
ages 4-10
$49.95

This basic introduction to counting, addition and subtraction is made more appealing by its cast of colorful characters and various game themes such as cartoon, space, transportation and adventure. Worksheets with increasing skill level math problems can be generated both on-screen and through print outs. Scores can be charted to monitor a player's progress over time. The package comes with a handy help manual for addition and subtraction problems.

New Math Blaster Plus
Davidson
DOS, Macintosh
ages 6-12
$49.95 (DOS), $59.95 (Macintosh)

This package features four different

games that help the player learn and practice addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals and percents. As Blasternaut (with his little robot pal, Spot), the player is challenged in each game by math problems from a choice of six different skill levels. Arcade-style fun, the game also touts a pro-environment twist: Blasternaut loves to recycle space trash.

GeoGames

Swamp Gas
Inline Design
Macintosh
ages 6+
$49.95

The UFO-driving title character of this game navigates its flying saucer over the United States and in doing so teaches the player lessons in U.S. geography. Major topics covered include states, state capitals, major cities and landmarks. The game includes quests to find specific locations and multiple choice questions about places visited. Humor and "alien" arcade action makes the subject matter all the more palatable to young tastes.

GeoPuzzle USA



PC Globe
Apple IIgs
ages 8+
$39.95

Can't find Georgia on a map of the U.S.? Here's help. This program provides for the entertaining learning of U.S. geography at novice, average and expert skill levels. Through maps and text, players learn about state location, population, state nickname, state trivia, fun facts and more. Then, each brightly colored state can be separated, mixed up and put back in its proper place, puzzle-style.

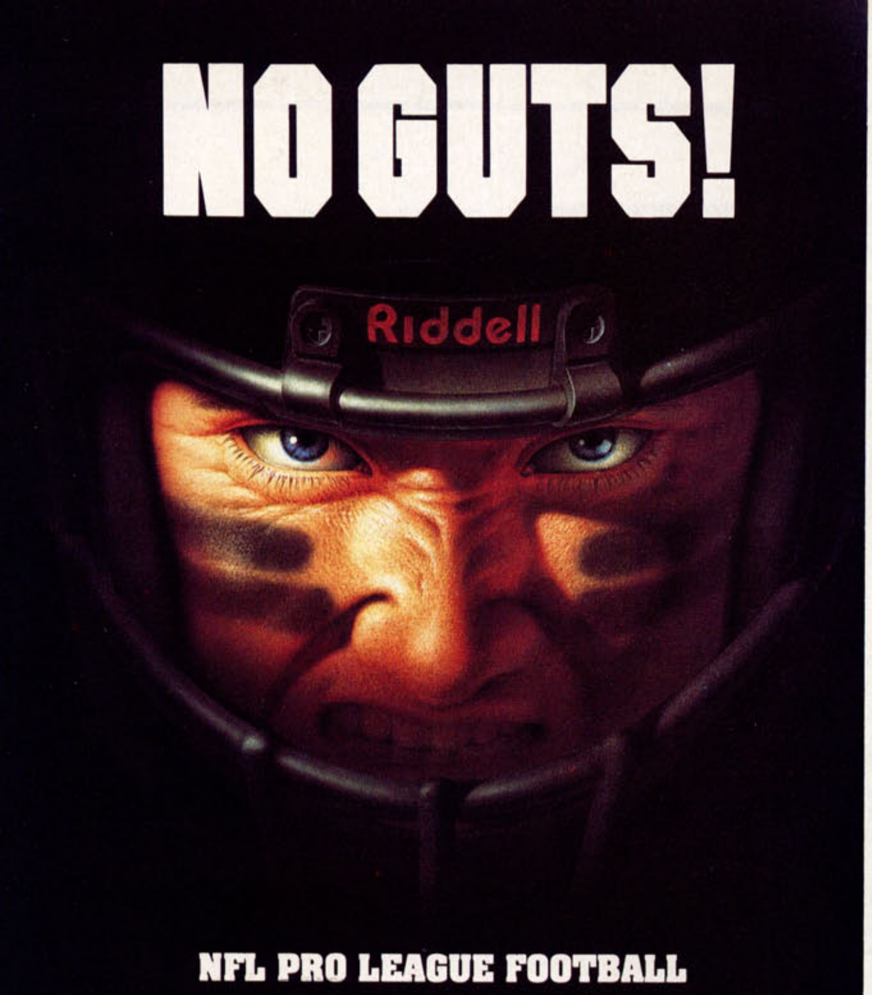
GeoQuiz
PC Globe
DOS, Apple IIgs
ages 8+
$49.95

A colorful approach to world geography, this game exposes the player to a travelogue of information about the countries visited, including a display of each country's flag, languages spoken and national currency. In the "Name it," "Recognize it" and "Locate it" games, the player is quizzed on and can become more familiar with the countries of the world. Perhaps the best trivia "on Earth."

Crosscountry USA
Didatech Software
DOS, Apple II
ages 9-15
$49.00

This award-winning geography simulation exposes players to map reading and basic U.S. geography. As a truck driver making deliveries across the country, the player covers 180 cities and a wide variety of terrain. As when planning any long-distance trip, the player must decide when to refuel, when to stop for food and rest, what is the most efficient route from

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From league play, to head to head, to historical replays NFL Pro League Football features endless strategy, unrivaled graphics, an abundance of statistics, in a game so real, USA TODAY has used it to project the last 4 Super Bowls!

NFL Pro League Football features: Weather conditions, 2 billion play combinations, a league play feature that allows a coach not to be present to play, stats compiling, and 5 seasons of NFL teams (with player names and statistics). And just look at these print out options: Post Game Stats, Play by Play, League Standings, Season Stats and League Leaders, to name just a few!

NFL Pro League Football is available for IBM or Compatible Computers with EGA or VGA Graphics. Printer is optional.

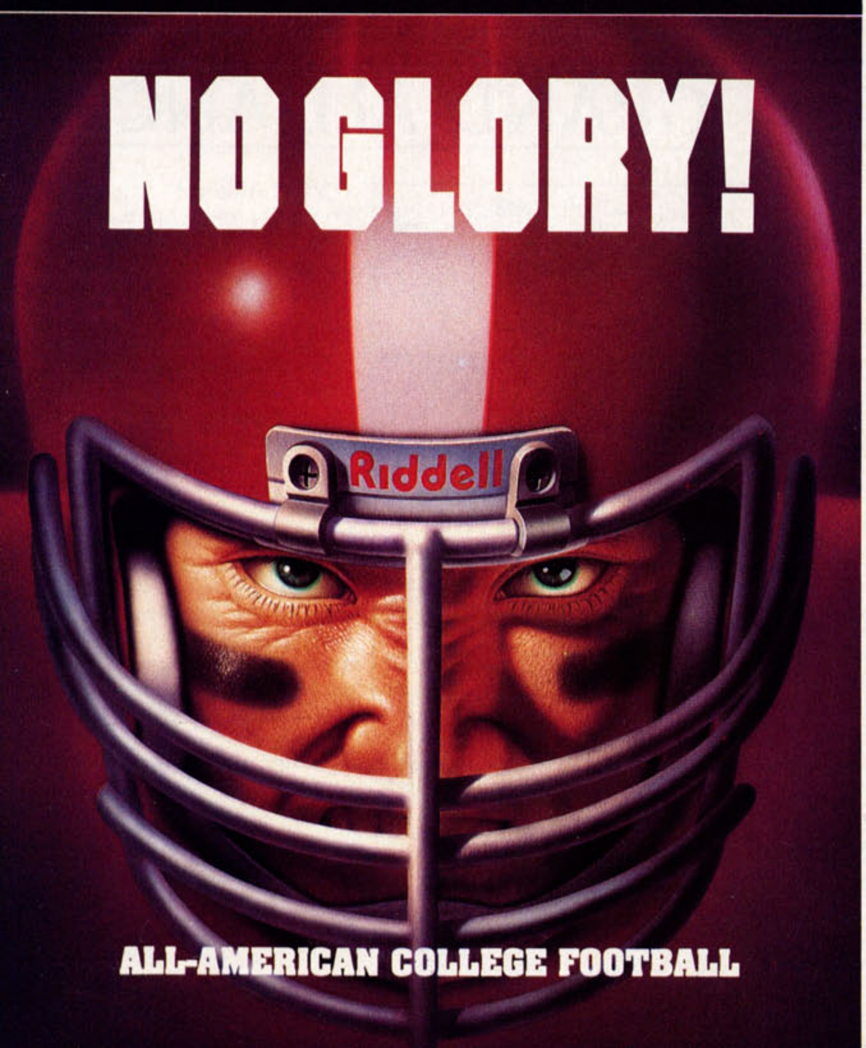


New graphics featuring NFL Teams and official uniforms.

MICRO SPORTS

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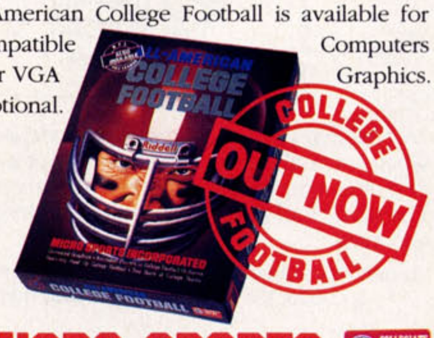
All-American College Football has more features that any other college football game ever designed. Coach your favourite team, over 50 schools represented. Additional teams are available on request. See if you can win your conference, or, better yet, see if you have what it takes to win the National Championship...

All-American College Football allows for League play, Head Up play (Computer or Human), Computer vs Computer and True Modem play.

Head Up play features animated players in their college uniforms, home and away jerseys.

All-American College Football also includes: Stats Keeper for maintaining Conference Standings, a Record Book, Season Stats, Conference Leaders, National Rankings plus much much more!

All-American College Football is available for IBM or Compatible Computers with EGA or VGA Graphics. Printer is optional.



MICRO SPORTS

1 - (800) -937 7737

ALL USA ORDERS SHIPPED UPS 2ND DAY AIR.

point A to point B, etc. It made this reviewer wish she were on Route 66, heading for Memphis.

Paint, Print and Color

My Paint
Saddleback Graphics
DOS, Apple IIgs, Amiga
ages 3-9
$49.95

This program features 28 drawings for kids to color in a choice of 12 bright colors, using a mouse or keyboard. With varied brush sizes or a "paint fill" icon, pictures of animals, space aliens, dinosaurs and more can be colored on-screen. Each picture also has its own digitized sound effect. Drawings can be saved and printed. Two add-on disks are also now available, one featuring the alphabet and the other teaching phonics.

The Jetsons & The Flintstones Print Kit
Gremlins 2 Print Kit
Beetlejuice Print Kit
Hi Tech Expressions
DOS, Apple, Commodore 64
ages 7+
$14.95 each



Players can create and print their own posters, banners, invitations, greeting cards and personalized stationery as well as masks and puppets with this simple, easy-to-use print kit. With a choice of typeface, type size, borders and graphics, players may get their first taste of desktop publishing with some of their favorite cartoon and movie characters. Think of these as "Saturday Morning *Print Shop*" software packages.

The Berenstain Bears Fun with Colors
Britannica Software
DOS
ages 3-10
$39.95

Players can choose from among 23 indoor and outdoor background scenes such as the Berenstain Bears' house, Grampa's barnyard and the spooky cave. The point-and-click interface can be used to fill designs with colors from the palette and place "clip art"-like pictures within the scene. Dialogue can even be added in word balloons. Clever animations accompany the clip art "stickers" to add to the amusement.

Smart Kids

It is a happy result of the modern age that anyone old enough to crawl to the computer keyboard can be exposed to a seemingly limitless supply of information, entertainment and imagination. With a minimum amount of help from Mom and Dad, mere mortal children of the '90s have the potential to become Techno-Kids. **cgw**


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Available for IBM and compatible computers. *Sound available through Disney Sound Source, Sound Blaster, P/S 1 and Tandy Audio Systems. Sound Source sold in Combo Paks and separately. Works with IBM and compatible computers only. The speech and sound technology in this product was produced under exclusive license to Walt Disney Computer Software, Inc. by Electronic Speech Systems of Hayward, CA. ©Disney



Good Night, Sweet Hawk

Microprose's Nighthawk: F-117A Stealth Fighter 2.0

by Dana L. Cadman

TITLE:	Nighthawk F-117A Stealth Fighter 2.0
SYSTEM:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	1
COPY PROTECT:	Document Look-Up
PRICE:	$79.95
DESIGNERS:	MPS Labs
PUBLISHER:	Microprose Hunt Valley, MD



If truth is stranger than fiction, then reality should be more fun than fantasy. That's why **Microprose** has elected to take their "Hall of Fame" classic *F-19 Stealth Fighter* and update it as *F-117A Nighthawk*.

More Than a New Coat of Paint

The F-117A's success in the Persian Gulf War has moved it from the obscurity of Lockheed's Skunk Works and into the Pentagon's spotlight of major high-tech weapon systems. MPS Labs has incorporated plenty of information, recently revealed to the public, into the game, as well as reworking other components in the simulation model in order to create an exciting aviation experience.

On the outside, the changes to the F-117A are obvious. The smooth, graceful curves of the F-19 have been replaced with the ungainly, angular facets of the actual plane. On the inside the game has undergone some major, but subtle, changes. The damage control screen that used to show an outline of the aircraft with indicators pointing to damaged areas has been replaced by a bank of warning lights that conform to military standards. The cluttered look of the HUD, as it appeared five years ago, has been replaced with the multi-function HUD found on aircraft with state-of-the-art avionics. Pilots can now choose NAV, AIR and GND modes which can be used to fly to a waypoint, line up approaching aircraft or act as a bombsight during a strike mission.

Improvements made to the game, other than updating the aircraft, include improved graphics and some spectacular animations. Shading helps distinguish terrain features and ground objects include more detail. While the resolution is lacking, *F-117A Stealth Fighter*'s realism is on a par with flight simulators distributed with high-powered workstations.

As for the animations, the opening sequence is impressive and proves that not all of the best directors are in Hollywood. MPS Labs has designed key presses to skip over those parts of the program, but doing so during the first few times one plays the game would be like cutting all the space sequences from *Star Wars*.

Not Just a Shoot 'em Up

Along with the missions found in the original *F-19 Stealth Fighter*, Microprose has added two missions from *F-15 Strike Eagle* and three missions from the near future. If the Persian Gulf and Central Europe aren't enough fun, pilots can fly over the Communist-controlled regions of Vietnam (1994), Cuba (1995) and North Korea (1997). The targets in all the scenarios are what one would expect to find in each region for that time period. The type of aircraft, ground radars and anti-aircraft missiles used by each country are consistent with those listed in the current directories published by Jane's Defense.

Flying against the enemy doesn't necessarily mean lots of destruction, however, since pilots can choose from ground-strike and air-to-air missions during periods of Cold War, Limited War and Conventional War (no sense in playing a Nuclear War). The level of tension will determine whether missions will be dropping bombs on a target, collecting reconnaissance data or dropping off secret equipment. While not as exhilarating as a dogfight, trying to photograph a chemical factory from 400 feet at 320 knots has excitement all its own.

To help pilots with their mission, the game includes two stealth fighters, the original "F-19" and the Lockheed F-117A.

"Tracy, I've got just what you need," cooed Breathless Mahoney.

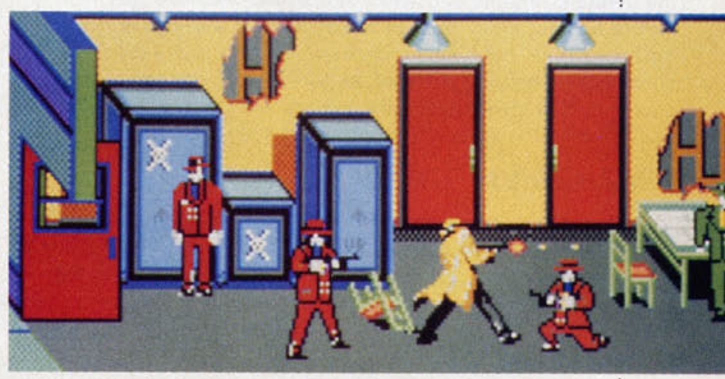


"The thug you're looking for is holed up on the wharf."

I hit the **ENTER** key and returned to the squad car. Then I slammed the left **CURSOR** all the way down and sped off to Pruneface's hideout. If I was going to crack this caper, I had to make him spill the beans.



As I raced along 8th Street, a radio call crackled over the Disney Sound Source.* "Calling Dick Tracy, calling Dick Tracy," blared the dispatcher's voice. "Bank robbery in progress at 9th Street and C Avenue." A moment later, I arrived at the



scene of the crime where I was greeted by a hail of bullets. I reached for the **SPACE BAR** to return the fire. Suddenly, I went down.

It took valuable time, but they patched me up and got me back out on the street.

There was still a lot I had to learn about this crime.

In the meantime, I could only hope that Pruneface hadn't skipped town.



To order: Visit your software retailer or call 1-800-688-1520.



DICK TRACY from DISNEY SOFTWARE

Available for IBM and compatibles and Amiga computers.
*Sound available through Disney Sound Source, Sound Blaster, P/S 1 and Tandy Audio Systems. Sound Source sold in Combo Paks and separately. Works with IBM and compatible computers only. Sound Source not necessary for Amiga computers. The speech and sound technology in this product was produced under exclusive license to Walt Disney Computer Software, Inc. by Electronic Speech Systems of Hayward, CA.

The "F-19" has twice as many weapon bays as the Lockheed and carries a 20 mm Vulcan gatling cannon for aerial combat.

This might seem to make it a superior choice, but it is not as "stealthy" as the Lockheed aircraft. Against Third World nations the "F-19" is an excellent aircraft, but for flying over Central Europe or North Korea (i.e. with radar operators and pilots who know what they're doing), the Lockheed is the better choice. It is better to travel light and unseen than become someone else's target practice.

The aerial combat and bombing runs will be enough to provide fun for any actionphile, but for those who want to enjoy the strategy of the game, the manual has over 150 pages of information on how the F-117A evolved, which radars to avoid (and how), tips on landing (read this section carefully!), what to expect in the different regions of conflict and which weapons are most effective against which type of target. Armed with this information, a pilot can make a better choice of weapons and increase the chance of destroying a target, as well as find tips on steering a course to that target that will minimize the chance of detection and increase the odds of getting to the target in one piece.

What's Not to Like?

With an updated version of multiple award-winning games (some of those awards presented by *CGW*), what could there be not to like? Buttons. There are too many of them. The design team has modeled every flight control available and, during tense situations, it is too easy to press the wrong key. It is very annoying to accidentally lower the landing gear during a bombing run instead of opening the weapons bay door.

The same problem occurs during landings, but is compounded by two-key combinations, such as shift and minus to cut the engine power. Simplifying the key combinations, or assigning the functions to larger (i.e. easier to locate) keys would be a big improvement.

Some of the controls could be more consistent. While one key might rotate through various functions on some displays, it takes several keys to change the information on other displays. It will take practice to remember which is which.

Landings are the one instance where **Microprose** could have relaxed the hard edge of reality. The F-117A was designed for stealth first, aerodynamics second. This plane is hard to fly and, during a landing, the plane will experience wind buffeting and ground effect, making a difficult operation even trickier. The beginning pilot should blow off the first few missions and just practice touch-downs before trying to keep a regular character on the scoreboard.

In Summary

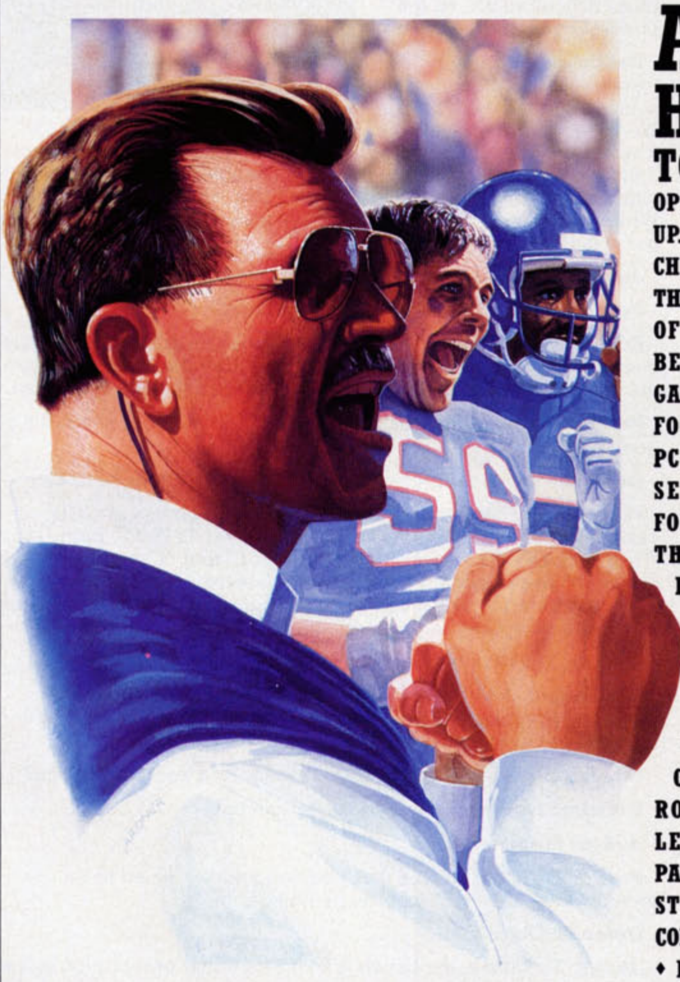
Despite the key layout and tricky landings, *F-117A* is a great simulation. **Microprose** has again created a game that is engrossing, challenging and educational. The quality of work shows in the informative manual, the attention to detail in all of the graphics and the design inherent in the well-considered scenarios.

Flight suit and helmet not included. **CGW**

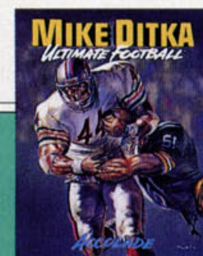
Mike Ditka Ultimate Football

"DITKA WAS OUT TO KICK BUTT AND TAKE NAMES.

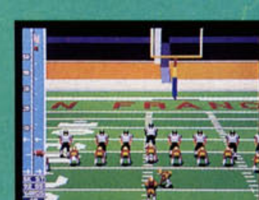
HE DIDN'T JUST WANT TO WIN. HE WANTED TO POUND HIS



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TITLE:	Objection!
SYSTEM:	IBM
COPY PROTECTION:	None
PRICE:	$89.95 (Professional Version) $49.95 (Consumer Version)
DESIGNER:	Ashley S. Lipson
PUBLISHER:	TransMedia, Inc. 27404 Drake Road, Suite 200 Farmington Hills, MI 48331 (313) 553-9100

TransMedia's Objection!

by Jasper Sylvester

The readers will please rise. The critical court of appeals of *Computer Gaming World* is now in session, the honorable Jasper Sylvester presiding. Readers may now be seated. Prosecution may now examine the first witness.

Prosecution: Would you state the name of the program for the benefit of the court?

Reviewer: *Objection!*

Judge: On what grounds, counselor?

Reviewer: Excuse me, your honor, but the defense attorney didn't say anything. The name of the game is *Objection!* and it is intended to sharpen a trial lawyer's skill at evidentiary law. The on-screen attorney asks questions of various witnesses and the defense attorney/player must either object or declare a question to be "proper" as soon as possible.

Prosecution: The fact is, you don't have the faintest idea how to review a game of this sort, do you?

Defense: Objection, your honor, counsel is being argumentative.

Judge: Sustained. Counsel will rephrase the question.

Reviewer: If I may explain, your honor, the defense attorney/player must type a one-letter code to determine whether he/she is allowing a question to stand as proper or to object on the basis of the rules of evidence. For example, the defense attorney/player would have pressed the "A" key in order to object to the prosecution's last question as being "Argumentative."

Judge: Counsel may proceed.

Prosecution: What, then, can you tell us about the PRODIGY review of *Objection!* that was published in the *CGW* section of the Computer Club?

Defense: Objection! Counsel is violating the best evidence rule.

Judge: Sustained! Counsel may continue.

Prosecution: Your honor, the people would like to submit the PRODIGY review as evidence. We believe it is necessary to include what the review stated about the game's real-time factor, in which players have to move fast in order to strike a key and, hence, score maximum points.

Judge: So ordered!

Prosecution: Wouldn't you agree that real-time games demonstrate more about a player's coordination than his/her logical prowess?

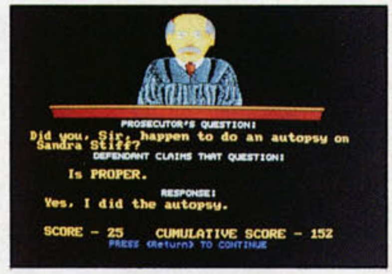
Reviewer: Not in this case, I ...

Defense: Objection! Counsel is calling for a conclusion on the part of the witness.

Judge: Objection sustained. Counsel is instructed to proceed more carefully according to accepted evidentiary rules.

Prosecution: What *is* the game's real-time factor?

Reviewer: As soon as a question is printed on the screen, a timer begins to run and points start to click off the maximum possible score. The sooner the defense attorney/player strikes the correct key, the higher the score he/she nets. This is to simulate the fact that the longer an actual trial lawyer allows an improper question or answer to stand, the more likely it is to make an impression upon a jury. Of course, it also means that those who are fast readers will have a significant advantage in the game.



Prosecution: Will the consumer version of the game be as difficult to win as the professional version?

Defense: Your honor, learned counsel's query assumes unestablished facts. We have not ascertained whether the consumer version of the game plays differently or not. Thus far, we are only certain that the consumer version does not come with the high-quality notebook of *The Rules of Evidence for Witness Testimony* ($54.95). We have also not determined that the game is difficult to win.

Judge: Objection is sustained.

Prosecution: Is the current version difficult?

Reviewer: It certainly is. Defense attorneys must be alert to every question and one cannot even reboot and start the case over again—the program uses different questions each time the trial is initiated.

Prosecution: So, what do your friends at *CGW* think about the program?

Defense: Your honor, please, counselor is calling for hearsay.

Prosecution: Your honor, we know that the gamers at *CGW* occasionally play these games at the office. I would like to appeal to "New York Life Insurance Co. v. Harrington" and "City of Dallas v. Donovan" to suggest that the witness' observation of emotional expressions on a player's face or "excited utterances" would constitute a hearsay exception.

Judge: Objection overruled. Witness will answer the question.

Reviewer: I observed Dr. Wilson intently staring at the monitor, muttering to himself and sighing with relief as he advanced to the next witness in the game's trial proceeding.

Prosecution: Has Dr. Wilson ever designed a computer game?

Defense: Objection! Question is immaterial.

Judge: Sustained!

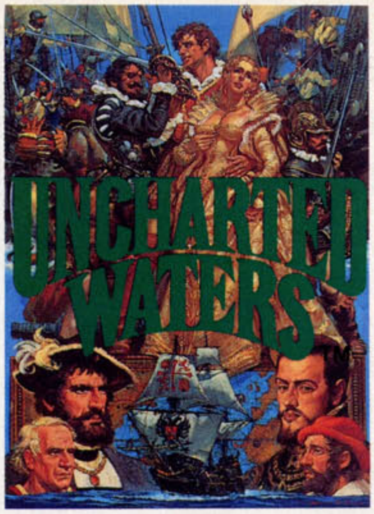
Prosecution: Isn't it true that you find yourself glued to the monitor whenever you boot the game?

Defense: Objection!

Judge: Sustained, the bench is well aware that prosecution is leading the witness. May I suggest that the witness summarize his feelings about the game in his own words.

Reviewer: Well, in addition to the rules of evidence violated in this article, the game teaches about the inadmissibility of answers to multiple questions, calls to reveal privileged information, use of questions too similar to questions asked previously, requests for answers which require speculation on the part of the witness and use of questions which are too vague. The graphics are not particularly well done, but once that timer starts running, no one notices the graphics.

Judge: The court has reached a verdict. We find the program worthy of recommendation to trial lawyers who need to sharpen their evidentiary skills or refresh their memories on the rules of evidence. We further find the program to be of significant interest to those who are interested in the legal profession as either a potential career or as an avocation (rabble rousers, habitual litigants and *L.A. Law* viewers). In addition, we find the program suitable for those who want a challenge that is cerebral, realistic and intense. Case dismissed. **CGW**



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- 128K RAM
- Battery Back-Up
- Enhanced Microchip For Better Graphics And Game Play



PC Version
- 640K
- EGA Color
- Ad-Lib Sound Board Support
- Mouse Support



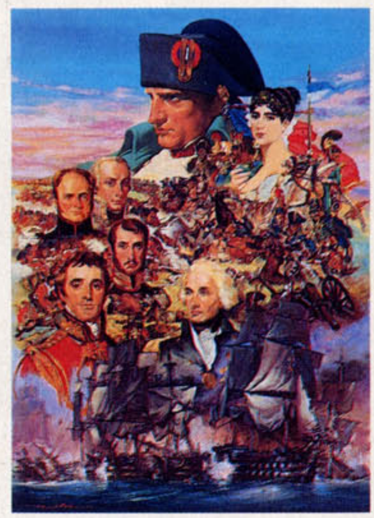
Real World Adventure.

NES Version
- 3 Meg Cartridge
- 128k RAM
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- Enhanced Microchip For Better Graphics And Game Play



PC Version
- 640k
- EGA Color
- Ad-Lib Sound Board Support
- Mouse Support





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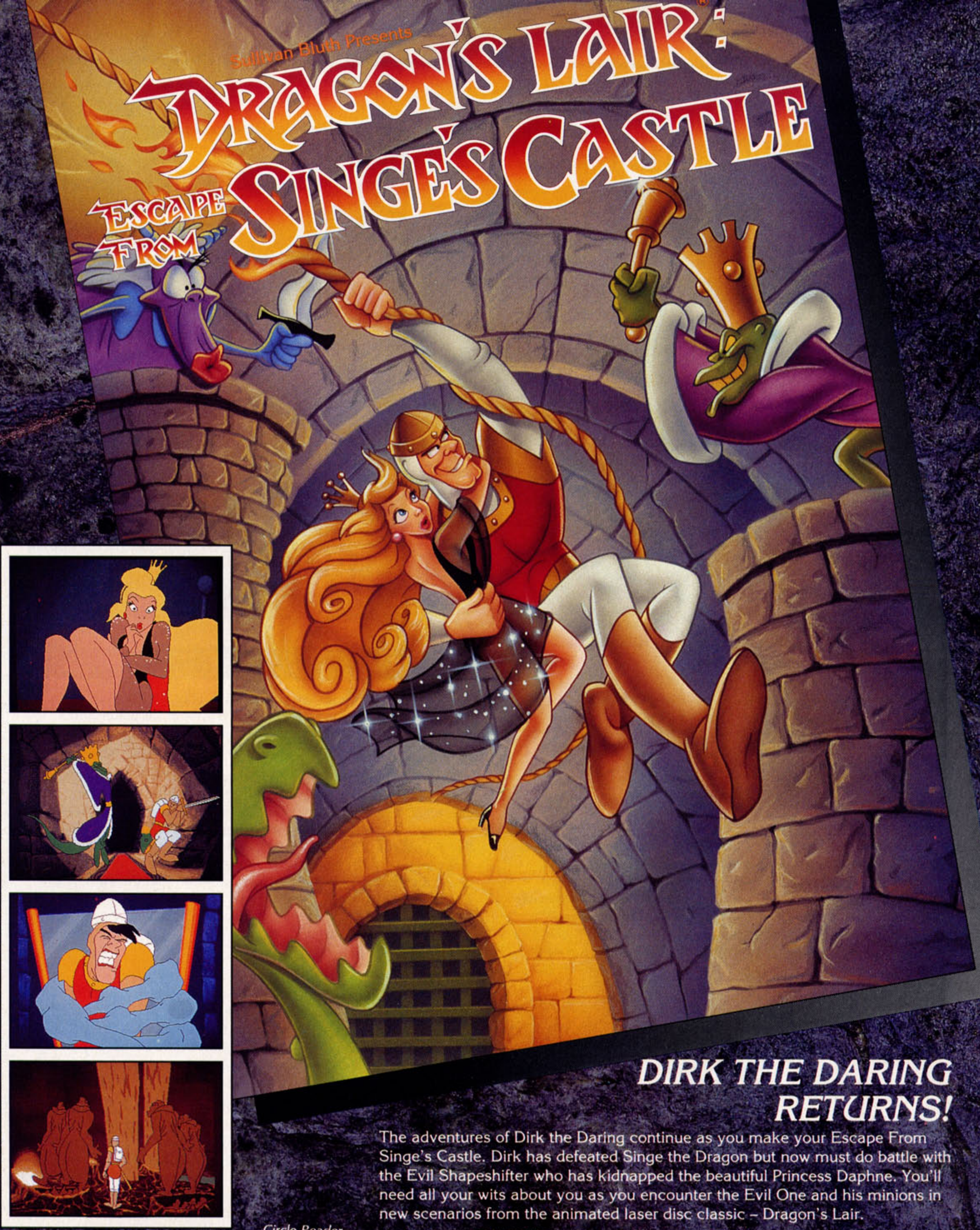
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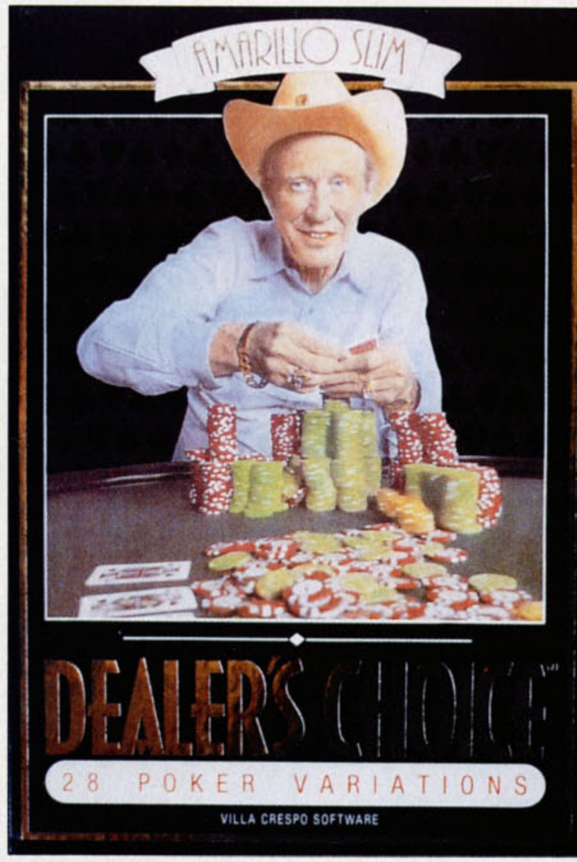
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Fat Odds From Slim

A Real "Player's Choice"

by Alan Emrich





TITLE:	Amarillo Slim Dealer's Choice
SYSTEM:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	0-1
PRICE:	$49.95
COPY PROTECT:	Non-repro paper look-up
PUBLISHER:	Villa Crespo Software Highland Park, IL

If one recalls the opening to the popular Tom Cruise movie *Risky Business*, a table full of high school lads were sitting around a poker table. Emulating adults, the dealer announced: "All right, here's the game: 5-card draw with a spit, anaconda, with a high-low split. Pass two to the right, one to the left; deuces, aces and one-eyed faces are wild; guts to open." Anyone who can follow all that is probably aware that this type of wild poker variant so popular in America's basements and dining rooms on Friday and Saturday nights is not easy to find in a computer software version of the game. In fact, most computer poker programs have concentrated on "pure" versions of a single type of game, such as *just* video poker or *just* 5-card draw. So much for "the way America plays."

Enter *Amarillo Slim Dealer's Choice* from computer gambling game publisher **Villa Crespo** software. Originally designed as *Vegas Johnny's Dealer's Choice* and released in 1989 from **Top Score Software**, Villa Crespo acquired the rights to this excellent but obscure computer poker program and proceeded to give it "The Crespo Touch." Finding a good game and making it better, John Comeau has added some delightful enhancements and created the first true "player's choice" in poker games with *Dealer's Choice*.

Scouting a Good Table

Players begin by "designing" the kind of table they want to play at. This feature consists of using the easy point-and-click mouse interface (or "arrows and enter" command keys) to select from a long laundry list of menu options for the poker enthusiast. Those who do not care to "shop" for the combination of poker rules and variants that suits them best will be given a default set of table games consisting of "high only: 5-card draw, 7-card stud and hold 'em."

Dealer's Choice comes with seven basic varieties of poker which players can opt for. They include 5-card stud, 6-card stud, 7-card stud, 5-card draw, Mexican (which is like 6-card stud "roll your own"), hold 'em and forty-four (in which each player gets a hand of four cards and four common cards are played). Each of these seven games can be played high only, high-low split, low only and/or high spade split. That's a total of 28 poker game variants, which gives *Amarillo Slim Dealer's Choice* the widest variety of computer poker games available to date.

But what about the poker "house rules?" Is "sandbagging" (check and raise) allowed? It's up to the player! Toggles are included so that many common rules of poker can be defined by the player, including what constitutes a low hand in lowball (is a "wheel" of A-2-3-4-5 the lowest hand, or does that count as a straight?), jacks or better versus "guts" to open a game of 5-card draw, and so on. In other words, by adjusting all the switches, play can be suited (forgive the pun) to one's own refined taste in poker games. For the poker connoisseur, variety is the spice of playing *Dealer's Choice*.

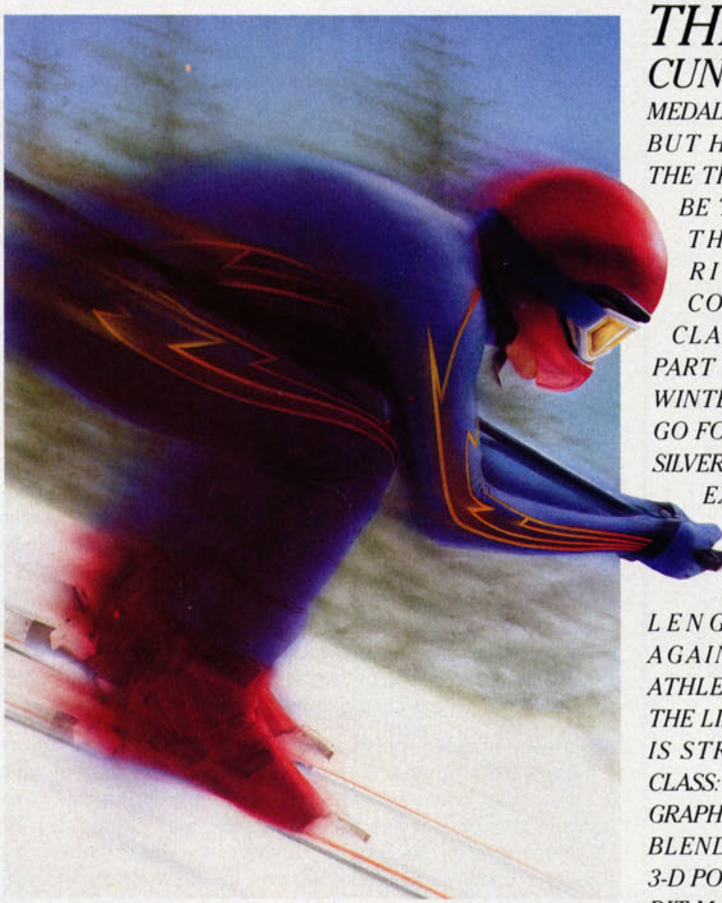
Deal Me In

Among a player's other pre-game choices are the number of players at the table (up to a full table of eight players), initial stake, the minimum bet, maximum bet, ante, blind bets, etc. Other players at the table are selected from three lists separated by skill level. The competition can range from casual to fierce, as a player desires.

Once all the pre-game decisions are made (and saved for future play—which can be a real time saver), a player is ready to click on the "Deal" button and start the action. The deal passes to the left each hand, and computer players will deal a randomly selected game from a list of those selected during set-up as ones the player desires to play this session. The cards, when dealt, are quite readable (and a toggle arranges them either by value or by the order in which they were dealt), with a player's "down cards" shown in a pinkish tint. At the end of the hand, a player has the option of "peeking" at all the down cards on the table, too.

The Games: Winter Challenge

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Play flows quickly and reminders of others' actions remain on the screen until the human player has made his or her own decision (notes such as "fold," "call" with a red chip and "raise" with a blue chip indicating the amount of the raise serve as these reminders). A human player is under no time constraints, and can study the table at leisure.

Table Talk

Not only does the action move right along, but virtually any sound card that supports speech (Sound Blaster, Covox, etc.) will add voices to the game. Male and female voices will announce their actions ("raise," "check," "fold," etc.) as well as print them on the screen. Somehow, the audio portion of a computer game always seems to add a third dimension to it, even a computer poker game!

Still, that's not all that's being said around the table. The player can always ask for some advice from renowned poker master Amarillo Slim himself. Whenever a player gets in a thorny situation, Slim is full of advice, written in his plain-speaking, down-home manner. Slim will advise whether folding, calling or raising is the right thing to do, and explain *why*, so that the player might carry the lesson forward and become a better poker player. For those who enjoy playing poker, but feel that an occasional professional bit of advice wouldn't hurt their play, *Amarillo Slim Dealer's Choice* is the software package to get. For beginners, Slim's advice can even be permanently toggled "on" before the game commences, so it's always like having a poker angel on the ear.

Knowing the Odds

Of course, *real* gamblers want to know the odds. Two kinds of calculations are available for the serious student of poker. During a hand, among the options available is an "odds" screen which shows the player's current hand, the odds of improving it to various levels (such as 3.75-1 of two pair, 60-1 of a full house, etc.). Another important set of odds is also presented, the "pot odds." These are the odds of the risk of one's next bet versus the odds of winning the showdown. In other words, the larger the pot and the smaller the bet required, the more it's worth the risk of drawing the next card against long odds of improving one's hand.

Between deals, players can call up the statistical information about what games have been played, how many of which hands were seen in the showdown, and the percentage of times they've won the pot. For example, a player could call up the 7-card stud menu, and for each of its four variants see the number of times a 3-of-a-kind was at the showdown to win the pot, and what percentage of the time it won the pot. This is designed to give players an appreciation for what is usually required to win at poker. For reference, the median winning hand is two pair, jacks up. Playing at "smaller tables" (fewer players) means that weaker hands can win more often, while "larger tables" usually require better hands to win.

Cashing In

There's no doubt that Villa Crespo is the leading computer gambling game publisher. Fortunately for computer gamblers, they did not quit with their *Amarillo Slim's Real Poker: 5-Card Stud*. When a better program came along, they seized upon it and improved it. *Amarillo Slim Dealer's Choice* is a great leap for poker enthusiasts. With the most opponents, most options and best gameplay, *Amarillo Slim Dealer's Choice* wins the pot, hands down! **CGW**


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Breach for the Stars

Starship Combat According to the Rules of Engagement

by Charles A. Smith



TITLE:	Rules of Engagement
SYSTEM:	IBM
COPY PROTECTION:	None
PRICE:	$59.95
DEVELOPER:	Omnitrend Software
PUBLISHER:	Mindcraft Torrance, CA

Rules of Engagement is a new game of tactical starship combat from **Omnitrend**, creators of *Breach 2*. Instead of leading a combat squad, *Rules of Engagement* allows one to assume control of a flagship and command other captains in the fleet. Success depends on making the proper tactical decisions for one's task force and remaining poised under the pressure of combat. The player must be a leader, a manager and a strategist, but *not* a joystick cadet out of a *Star Wars* movie. No seat-of-the-pants flying will work for this game. Instead, players conduct all operations through a ship's unique Command and Control Systems Interface (CCSI) *[Ed: See the designer's notes on this interface in* CGW *#84, p.64]* and the mastery of the CCSI is the key to success in both gameplay and suspension of disbelief.

Perhaps the best news, however, is that with **Omnitrend**'s new Interlocking Game System (IGS), one does not have to be satisfied with resolving battles using *Rules of Engagement*. This is because *Rules* can be linked with *Breach 2* for man-to-man combat by boarding parties or commando raids on outposts, adding an element of realism which has been heretofore unknown in space combat games.

First Looks

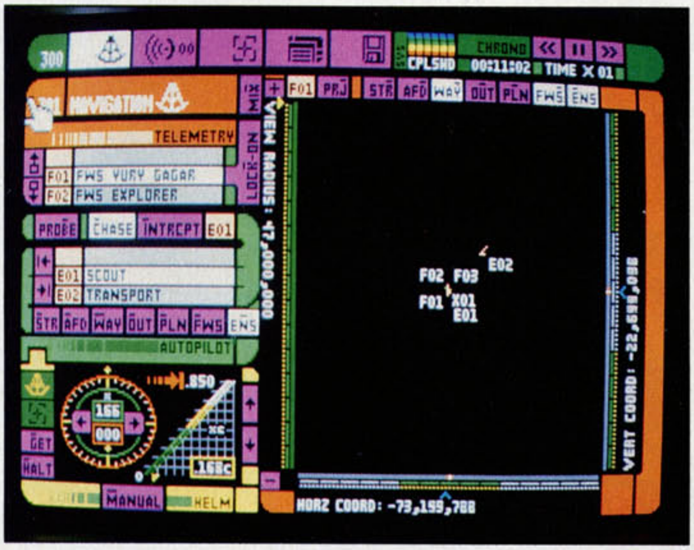
Rules of Engagement comes on four low-density 5 1/4" disks. The game is easily installed to a hard disk, since graphic files are normally stored in compressed format, but can be decompressed to speed the game along (if one elects to trade about 2.5 megabytes of hard disk space in exchange for game speed). In addition, the heavy-duty manual will assist the reader in everything from interfacing with the game through becoming immersed in the fiction, improving one's tactics and creating customized missions.

Speaking of customization, players can not only participate in the basic twenty missions included with the game, but can design their own by creating outposts and starships. Forces are then placed in a system composed of planets, asteroid belts, waypoints, and one or two suns. Then, it is merely a matter of establishing the victory conditions and the battle can begin.

The Interface

Each of the major panels in the CCSI (Data Retrieval, Navigation, Communications, Tactical) consists of several distinct parts. Action buttons are magenta and information buttons are blue. All other information on the panel is explanatory only. For example, when referring to the Navigation Panel, one can go to any other


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major panel; save or quit the game; accelerate or decelerate time (never slower than real-time, however); select what to view in the star system (or even what to view from another starship); probe and intercept a planet, starship, outpost or sun; or assume manual control over navigation of the flagship. Note, however, that only one's personal flagship is under direct control, since the other starships in the fleet are led by captains under the player's "command" (if the computer subordinates *choose* to listen and follow orders, that is).

On the Data Retrieval Panel is access to fleet statistics and information about the mission, the various captains in the fleet and the UDP (United Democratic Planets). Damage control operations are accomplished by assigning different percentages of the crew to repair each ship's system.

The Communications Panel allows one to send and receive orders to any Federated Worlds (FW) or UDP starships. All commands (for example, capture enemy ship, proceed to waypoint, patrol outposts) are selected from a menu, and information about anything that might interfere with communication (like electromagnetic interference) is also provided.

The Tactical Panel is the most complicated (it's life or death here). From here, players carry out all combat and defense activities, including ship-to-ship combat, docking with friendly outposts and boarding enemy starships/outposts. Included are a targeting scope and lock-on button, fire control and weaponry settings, a combat map with ship's position and range to target, selections for tactical maneuvers, defensive system readings and a self-destruct control.

Computer Read-Out

This reviewer looks for three characteristics in games of this type. First, is it attractive? This involves whether the game is pleasing, not only to the eye and ear, but to the mind as well. It also determines if all the elements (graphics, sound, game play) fit together properly or is it fragmented, as though created by committee.

For this reviewer, *Rules of Engagement* is elegant. There are no gee-whiz 256-color images. Instead, graphic designer Maurice Molyneaux and programmer Thomas Carbone opted for austerity and functionality to transform one's machine into a computer with deadly potential fitting snugly into the game's fiction.

The alien creation utility is a good example of this teamwork. Remember the childhood picture books that allowed children to mix and match various body parts in order to construct outlandish creatures? That is **Omnitrend**'s approach in its alien character generator. In addition to creating more than 700,000 physical combinations for one's enemies, a player also determines a personality profile that the program uses to determine how that race will behave in a given mission.

Second, one needs to consider whether the game will encourage players to suspend disbelief or not. Does it make sense, given the world it models? Here, there must be a qualified "Yes" to *Rules of Engagement*. Both the bad guys and one's own FWAF captains behave consistently within their personalities. There might quibbles about the details: planet mass does not affect starship velocity, there are no economic constraints when one constructs a fleet and outposts do not have offensive capabilities (originally having been built during peacetime) nor can they be destroyed. Hopefully, the scope of this game covers so much ground (or space) in its presentation of starship combat that most players will forgive the design team for these limitations.

Finally, one must consider whether the game is entrancing or not. Will it make players forget that they are sitting in a room in front of a computer; that bills are gathering dust on top of the refrigerator; that the clock reads 2:30 AM and that they have to get up at 6:30 to go to work? If one likes the idea of starship management, there is magic in *Rules of Engagement*. For a short while, players will take command of a starship's powerful computer. When the balloon goes up (or down or around or whatever it does in space) and the alarms go off, it's nail-biting time.

Version 1.0 of *Rules of Engagement* had a bug that caused computers to lock up on some missions. **Omnitrend** promises to resolve these problems in version 1.2. Since the company has had a good reputation for supporting *Breach 2*, one can hope that problems of this kind will be resolved as soon as possible.

Tactical Briefing

The following suggestions are intended to complement those already found in the manual. First, except in the initial scenarios, one should *never* play at "Beginner" level. Knowing exactly where the enemy is at the beginning of the game, as one does when playing at the lowest level, greatly reduces the replay value of the mission when one is ready to move up in difficulty.

Second, since destroyed systems can never be repaired, players should make "escaping" a top priority whenever any systems fall below 50% effectiveness. It is especially important to safeguard the ship's drives.

Third, fire long-distance missiles first and consider the closing speed of enemy ships. Missile range increases when moving at maximum speed and firing straight ahead. One should also turn on the beam missile defense when firing missiles.

Fourth, after playing a mission a few times, it is possible to make it more difficult or easier by re-assembling it. One can change the number of friendly and enemy ships or assign a different enemy race to the battle. Whenever re-assembling a mission, it is a good idea to vary the strength of enemy starships by editing their damage levels either up (to make the mission more difficult) or down (to make the mission easier). Once these levels are set, they cannot be repaired to any greater percentage during the game. **cgw**

CHIPS & BITS • IBM & AMIGA GAMES

IBM WARGAMES

Action North Atlantic	$28
Action off River Plate	$28
Action Stations	$29
Air Raid Pearl Harbour	$28
Amer Civil War 1 - 3 Ea	$22
Ancient Battles	$32



'MEGAFORTRESS: FLIGHT OF THE OLD DOG' by **THREE SIXTY PACIFIC** is the standard for bomber simulations. Complete with offensive and defensive weapons and the latest electronic technology the B52 Megafortress is capable of attacking any target in the world. Sound board support, 256 color graphics, and multiple camera angles make this a state of the art simulation. **$37**

Banzai	$28
Battle of the Atlantic	$39
Battle of Austerlitz	$28
Battle Stations	$28
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Battle Tank Kursk	$39
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Cohort	$34
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Conflict: Middle East	$37
Conflict in Vietnam	$12
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Decision at Gettysburg	$29
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Fifth Eskadra	$39
Fire Brigade	$34
Fleet Med	$39
Frontline	$34
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Grey Seas, Grey Skies	$39
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Harpoon	$37
Harpoon Set 2 or 3	$19
Harpoon Set 4	$24

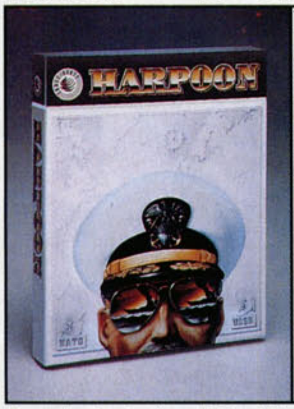


'DUSK OF THE GODS' from **INTERSTEL** is a roleplaying game that lets you enter Valhalla. Become one of Odin's champions, explore the realms of creation (Asgard, Midgard, & Jotenheim), seek out knowledge and attempt to tip the scales in favor of Odin at the battle of Ragnorok. Features include accurate world of Viking mythology, 256 color VGA, sound board support & point click interface. **$38**

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Harpoon Bundle	$54
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IBM WARGAMES

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Nam 65-75	$45
Northern Fleet	$39
North & South	$27



THREE SIXTY PACIFIC'S 'HARPOON CHALLENGER PAK' is a realistic view of NATO vs USSR. Play either side in this high stakes cat & mouse game. With more than 100 authentic weapons systems, this is modern naval warfare. Not just one game but an entire game system. Includes Harpoon, Battleset 1: GIUK, Battleset 2: North Atlantic Convoy, Scenario Editor, & Battle Book. **$54**

Operation Overlord	$39
Pacific Storm Midway	$39
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Prelude to Jutland	$28
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Rising Sun	$28
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Rommel at Gazala	$39
Rommel North Africa	$22

IBM STRATEGY

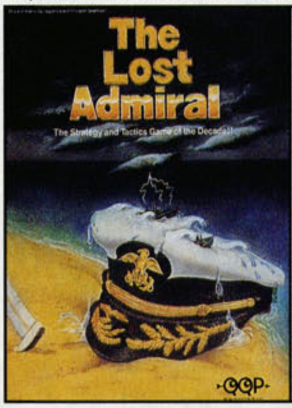
Ancient Art War	$31
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Nuclear War	$12
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IBM WARGAMES

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Vulcan	$34
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Waterloo	$12
Western Front	$37
White Death	$29

IBM STRATEGY

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Paladin	$28
Perfect General	$34
Populous	$21
Populous & Simcity	$34
Populous Promise Land	$14

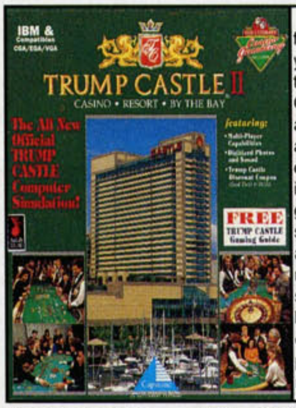


'LOST ADMIRAL' from **QUANTUM QUALITY PRODUCTIONS** is a turn based production naval strategy game. Features 9 scenarios, a random map scenario, 15 campaign games, flagships with special abilities, very strong artificial intelligence, in depth officers ranking system, accumulates your career history as you play, 2 player option, and sound board support. In short better than **EMPIRE. $34**

Power Monger	$32
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IBM ADVENTURE

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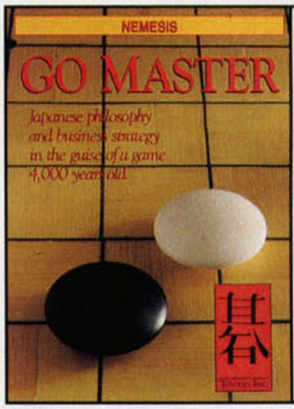


'TRUMP CASTLE II' from **CAPSTONE** puts you in Atlantic City at the Trump Castle Casino Resort with actual digitized images and sound from the casino itself. Features include 256 color VGA graphics, sound board support, digitized animations and multiplayer capability for six gambling games, baccarat, blackjack, craps, roulette, video poker, and slot machines. **$32**

Castle of Dr Brain	$29
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Code Name: Iceman	$21
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Colonel Bequest 2 vga	$34
Conquests of Camelot	$21

IBM ADVENTURE

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Countdown	$37
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Deja Vu	$12
Deja Vu 2 Lost in LV	$12
Die Hard	$28
Don't Go Alone	$12
Duck Tales	$28



'NEMESIS GO' from **TOYOGO** is the ultimate computer **GO** program. With the simplicity of checkers and the complexity of chess, **GO** is both an enjoyable recreation and a serious strategy game. **GO MASTER** is a basic **GO** player and tutor. **JOSEKI GENIUS** adds complex corner openings. **TACTICAL WIZARD** is the ultimate tutor offering in depth tactical analysis. **GO** is 4000 years old. **$39**

Earthrise	$24
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Felony	$12
Fool's Errand	$12
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Gamma Force	$12
Geisha	$32
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Harley Davidson	$12
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Hound of Shadow	$19

IBM ADVENTURE

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Leisure Suit Lrry 3	$34
Leisure Suit Lrry 5	$34
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Secrt Monky Islnd 1vga	$38
Secrt Monky Islnd 2	$38
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Sinbad	$12
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Space Quest 1 vga	$34
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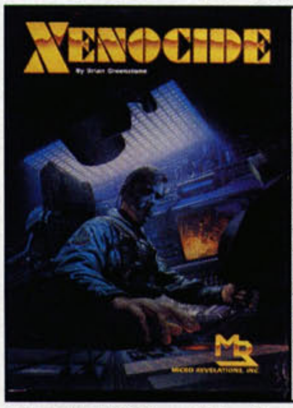
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Advance to Boardwalk	$15
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Battlechess 1vga	$31
Battlechess 2	$31



'STARTREK: THE 25th ANNIVERSARY' from **INTERPLAY** combines a realistic 3D space flight simulator with an in depth role-playing game. Pilot the Enterprise through a simulation similar to WING COMMANDER. Discover dozens of planets, beam down to explore them. Each planet with its own unique adventure. Features point-and-click, 256 color VGA & adlib support. **$36**

Big Boggle	$15
Ceasar's Palace	$15
Centerfold Squares	$21
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Cribbage King/Gin King	$19
Crossword Magic	$32
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Electric Jigsaw	$15
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GO Master 5 Deluxe	$109
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GO Master 5	$39
GO Master 5 Toolkit	$39
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Hollywood Squares	$15

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Whales	$34
Where Amrcas Pst CSD	$37
Where Europe CSD	$30
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'XENOCIDE' from **MICRO REVELATIONS** is a fast paced arcade puzzle strategy game. This is an all in one arcade game with first person 3D view simulator, profile side view, and top down view. Three moons with four levels each require fast reflexes and sound strategy/puzzle solving to obliterate the Xenomorphs. Good graphics in 256 color VGA with sound board support. **$29**

Where World CSD	$27
Where World CSD Dlx	$49
Where Time CSD	$30
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Price is Right	$15
Prime TIme Hits 1 or 2	$25
Puzzle Gallery	$26
Puzznic	$25



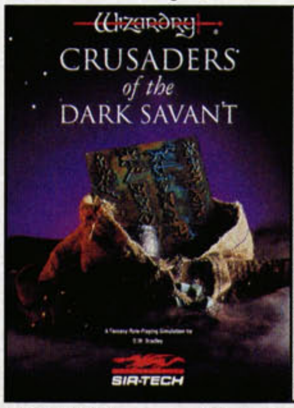
'ACTION STATIONS' by **RAW SOFTWARE** is a naval suface combat simulation. This game covers 1922 to 45 in amazing detail. Features 21 status displays, 30 scenarios in the Atlantic, Med and Pacific, subordinate comanders, treatment of smoke, starshells, flares, radar, weather, shore batteries, aircraft spotting & more. Ships are modeled in detail. This is the premier WW2 naval game. **$29**

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Spot	$24
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Strip Poker 3	$31
Strip Poker Data 1-5 Ea	$19
Tetris	$24

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B ball Ch. 1989 - 90 Ea	$17
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Fast Break	$17
GBA Basketball	$17
GFL Champ Football	$12
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Hardball 2	$28
Hat Trick	$21
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Lakers v Celtics	$19
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LH Boxing	$30
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LH Hockey	$30
LH Pro Basketball	$30
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LH League Leaders	$15
LH Utility Disks	$15
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Links Course 1 -5 Ea	$17
Low Blow	$24

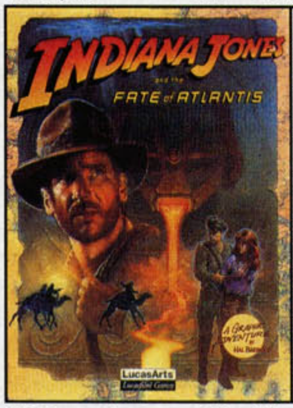
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Madden Football	$32
Madden TD 89	$18
Madden TD 90	$18
Magic Johnson Fst Brk	$ 9
Magic Johnson MVP	$18
Mario Andretti Racing	$32



'CRUSADERS OF THE DARK SAVANT: WIZARDRY 7' from **SIRTECH** is high tech fantasy roleplaying at its best. **WIZ7** includes multiple beginnings, outdoor campaigns in caves, forests, rivers, dungeons, a complete city. NPCs talk to each other & entire computer controlled parties compete with the player. Features point & click interface, 256 color VGA & sound board support. **$39**

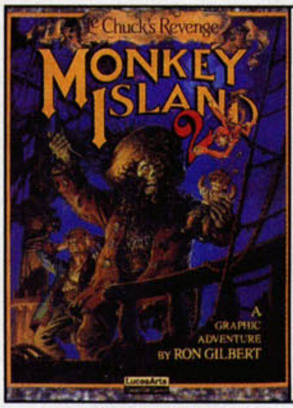
Mean 18 Golf	$30
Mean 18 Course 5 & 6	$25
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'INDIANA JONES: THE FATE OF ATLANTIS' from **LUCASFILM GAMES** is the fourth Indy Jones adventure. Once again it is Indy vs Nazis as he tries to uncover the secrets of Atlantis. Join Sophia Hapgood, archeologist psychic, to visit Iceland, Monte Carlo, Africa, & Crete. True to form features 200 locations, great animation with scaling, 256 color VGA, interactive sound, point & click interface. **$38**

NG Course 1 or 2	$15
NG Course 1 & 2	$19
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Skie or Die	$28
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Super Car Pack	$37
Tennis Cup	$32
Tie Break Tennis	$27



In **'SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND II'** from **LUCASFILM GAMES** LeChucky is back & he is ready to settle the score. Guybrush must unite 3 pieces of the map to find the treasure and rid himself of LeChuck. New locations, new cast of characters, plus special appearances of Governor Marley, Voodoo Princess, & Stan. With 256 color VGA, & sound board reggae tunes. **$38**

TKO Boxing	$ 9
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Weaver 1988 - 1990 Ea	$16
Weaver Baseball 2.0	$32
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Computer Gaming World's Fifth Annual



Although the outside temperature was approximately 100 degrees, *CGW*'s editorial department looked like it was under a wintry avalanche of styrofoam by the time all the Christmas products for this survey were unpacked. As has been the tradition with the Christmas Buying Guide, most of the products covered should be on the shelves by the time this issue hits the stands and some will, once again, miss Christmas because of the unforeseen problems often associated with publishing computer software. Also, according to *CGW* tradition, the purpose of this article is to underscore some of what we see as potentially exciting products for computer gaming Christmas presents. Since, of course, we have not seen all of these games in their final form, mention in the buying guide does not equal a complete recommendation. It is to be hoped that our readers will circle the interesting titles and pass the article along to their personal Santa, Father Christmas, sugar daddy, parents, spouse or significant other.

✔ Action for Arnold

ABC Wide World of Sports Boxing from **Data East** (IBM, $49.95) vividly presents the spectacle of boxing in a colorful combination of action sequences, role-playing decisions and career management. The boxers are digitized representations of actual fighters and players can create custom fighters whom they manage through realistic careers (moving upward to their prime and onward through their decline or retirement). Unlike most boxing games, players have a reason to make money as they purchase training equipment and/or hire managers and trainers to improve their skills.

Ancient Art of War in the Skies (*AAWS*)is the third game in **Broderbund**'s "Ancient" series (which seems to be getting more modern all the time). *AAWS* (IBM, $44.95) features World War I air combat (presented in arcade-game style) in the context of a major land campaign. As the player plans and wins aerial sorties, the lines of earthbound troops move forward or backward as an indication of the effect which the air war is having on the ground campaign. For variety, there are several different types of arcade sequences involved with different skills required for success.

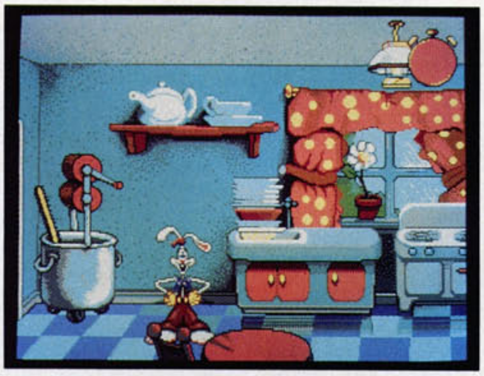
Conan the Cimmerian (IBM, $49.99) is action/adventure in the European tradition. That is, players manipulate Robert E. Howard's free-swinging mercenary through real-time, horizontal scrolling combat via joystick or keyboard. The twist in **Virgin Games**' *Conan the Cimmerian* is that the freebooter's attributes for stamina, swing (the rating for free-swinging default combat), thrust (specialized sword combat), chop (vicious sword combat), defense, stealth and damage actually improve as a result of the mercenary's experience. There is even a role-playing command for "Bribery" that one would not expect to find in a pure action game.

The Godfather (Amiga, IBM, $49.95) is the first of two games from **U.S. Gold** that are to be based on the film series. *The Godfather*, which will be available at Christmas, seems like a typical horizontal-scrolling beat-'em-up and shoot-'em-up game. One major difference between *The Godfather* and many other games in its genre is that players will have to have the on-screen character actually "draw" his gun from his pocket in order to shoot and the computer actually, wonder of wonders, keeps track of ammunition expended. The game also contains a few discoveries and hidden features to keep matters interesting. Players will try to find hidden doors and a variety of objects to enable them to move onward into other portions of the game.

Hare Raising Havoc (IBM, $49.95—$69.95 with sound source) from **Walt Disney Software** could feasibly be labeled as an interactive cartoon. Players solve physical logic puzzles in order to set up an animated sequence and speed Roger Rabbit on his way. The plot is simple. Roger is supposed to be baby-sitting Baby Herman while Mommy is away, but (there's always a "but") the baby sneaks out while Mommy is giving orders to Roger and the luckless rabbit is accidentally locked in the house. The object of the game is to get Roger out of each individual room of the house and on to rescue Baby Herman before Mommy gets home, the director yells "Cut!" and Roger finds himself in trouble.



Ancient Art of War in the Skies



Hare Raising Havoc



The Adventures of Willy Beamish

One of the most fascinating aspects of the game is the fact that the player really feels like he/she is directing the action. Another is that each successful solution presents an entertaining animation to reward the player.

Lemmings, the fascinating action/puzzle game from **Psygnosis** (Amiga, IBM, $49.99), just recently shipped on the IBM PC. Judging from the reader response received after its initial Amiga release, this should be a very hot title for Christmas. As the cartoon lemmings of the game's title try to migrate from one side of the computer screen to another, it becomes the player's job to assign lemmings as blockers, climbers, floaters, diggers, miners, bashers and/or bridge-builders in order to keep the cute little creatures from committing cartoon "hari-kari."

PGA Tour® Golf—Limited Edition (IBM, $69.95) is a special holiday package of **Electronic Arts**' PGA-licensed golf product. In addition to the basic game, the special holiday edition contains a new course disk and a videotape entitled "The History of the PGA Tour®." Aficionados of the game point to the number of decision points during each hole and the quality opposition of the computer opponents (modeled after some of the tour's finest professional golfers).

Walt Disney Software's *The Rocketeer* (IBM, $49.95, with Sound Source, $69.95) continues the adventures of the pulp comic hero which began in the film. The game (described more fully in *CGW* #88 p. 56) advances the story via a series of action sequences connected by splash screens reminiscent of graphic novels.

As described in *CGW* #88 p. 30, *Wing Commander II* (IBM, $79.95, with Voice Module, $99.95) is the sequel to *CGW*'s 1991 Game of the Year. The sequel showcases many "high-end" features and adds much to a space battle flight simulator with cinematic sequences. The soundtrack has been enhanced, voices have been added (with the Voice Module plus a Sound Blaster card), a VCR-like replay feature is now included and the "cinematography" is much broader and more lively in VGA than its predecessor. Players will enjoy the other new high-tech features included in this, the latest current game redefining the term "gee whiz."

✔ Adventure for Alice

Dynamix's *The Adventures of Willy Beamish* (IBM, $59.95) is both a challenging adventure game and a fascinating entertainment (see *CGW* #84 p. 50 and *CGW* #86 p. 10). Sometimes billed as an interactive cartoon, *The Adventures of Willy Beamish* combines traditional animation techniques with the latest technological wizardry in order to capture the free-spirited nature of childhood as it struggles with the seeming oppression of adult authority. Though Willy has his share of *tough* puzzles to solve, the game does not have the feel of moving from puzzle to puzzle. Its texture is more like solving the puzzle so that the next free-running animation can unveil more of the comical, but stereotypically true-to-life, story.

Conquest of the Longbow: The Adventures of Robin Hood (IBM, $59.95) is **Sierra**'s sequel to *Conquests of Camelot*. Although the game does not look anything like its predecessor, it does bear the type of attention to intricate detail that Christy Marx is known for with regard to the way she handles familiar legends. What she did for the Arthurian legend in the first game, she accomplishes for Robin Hood by assimilating the original ballads, original maps of Nottingham (circa 1193), Druidic lore and the historical information concerning King Richard's capture in Austria (as he returned from the Third Crusade) into the plot for the new game. In addition, **Sierra**'s new technology allows for more lifelike characterization (through rotoscoping live actors and re-rendering them on the computer), and the higher VGA definition and expanded color palette makes for a more vivid presentation. Those who have no desire to go through the preliminary motifs of matching quarterstaffs against Little John (or recruiting the other "merry men") and want to get right to the rescues, schemes, battles, magic and romance should appreciate Christy's approach to the game's design.

Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis (IBM, $59.95) is the first Indiana Jones game from **Lucasfilm** that is not based on a feature film. It is the largest graphic adventure that **Lucasfilm** has yet produced, due largely to the fact that it is three games in one. There is no marketing hype whatsoever in that claim. Players with a bent toward action games will end up playing a very different style adventure than players who like classic puzzle-solving or those who try to talk their way out of sticky situations with a typical Indy-esque comment. The standard **Lucasfilm** interface has metamorphosed into one with an icon-based inventory and is the first **Lucasfilm** product to use rotoscoping as a technique for enhancing character animation.

Leisure Suit Larry V from **Sierra** (IBM, $59.95) was described in *CGW* #88 p. 94. The latest entry in Larry's (and Patti's) quest for sophomoric sex features the company's new parserless interface and enough new puzzles to keep traditional adventure fans entertained for hours.

Accolade's *Les Manley in Lost in L.A.* (IBM, $59.95) is veteran game designer Steve Cartwright's latest venture into the field of sensuous satire. In this elaborately digitized presentation, Cartwright satirizes the entertainment capital of the world as he pokes fun at gossip, conspiracy and mystery buffs. The plot is vintage murder, kidnapping and mayhem, but there is enough



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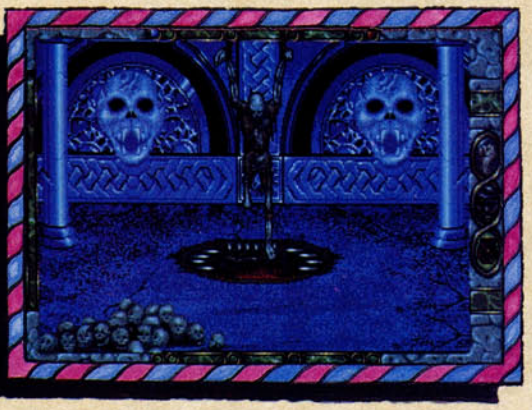
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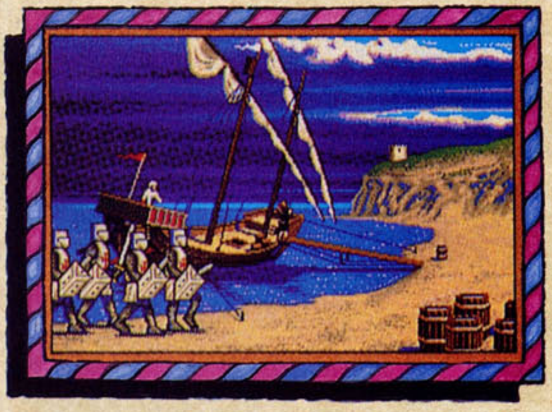
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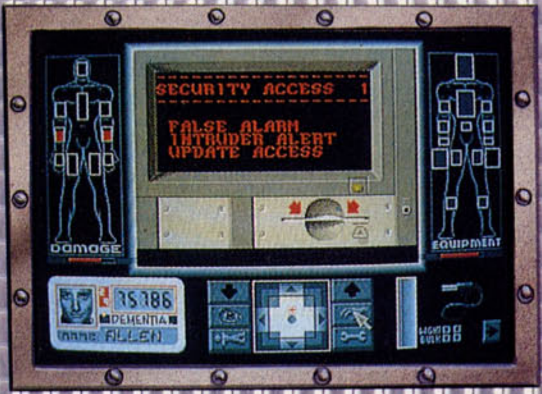
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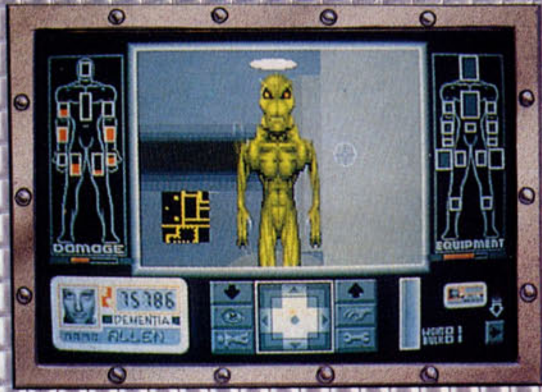
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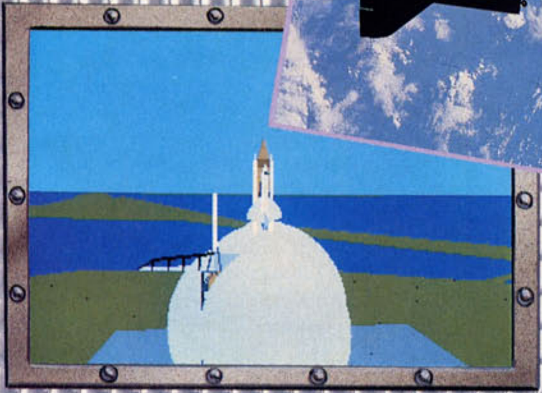
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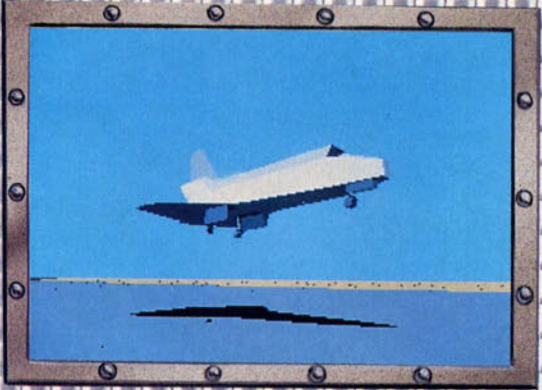
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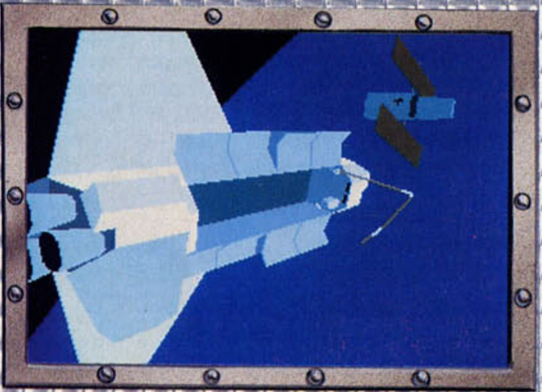
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Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis



Les Manley in Lost in L.A.

cheesecake and sexual innuendo to keep Cartwright off the Supreme Court for life. Add the new "point and click" interface in place of the awkward parser used in Les Manley's initial appearance (*Search for the King*) and one has a game that should have (pardon the sexist pun) "broad" appeal.

Martian Memorandum (IBM, $59.95) is the latest interactive movie from **Access Software**. A sequel to the company's critically acclaimed *Mean Streets* adventure, *Martian Memorandum* is billed as a multimedia product because of its use of full motion video sequences and digitized speech (synchronized to the animation so that it does not look like a poorly dubbed foreign film). The game comes complete with an on-line help feature and intuitive interface as interplanetary detective Tex Murphy finds himself in the midst of another caper.

LeChuck's Revenge: Secret of Monkey Island II (IBM, $59.95) is the first **Lucasfilm** graphic adventure to be rendered completely in marker and gouache prior to being scanned onto the computer. In addition to being the sequel to one of the most humorous (and non-sexist) adventures ever released on a personal computer, *LeChuck's Revenge* offers a stunning environment to explore and plenty of witty repartee.

Police Quest 3 is another new **Sierra** game (IBM, $59.95) which uses rotoscoped figures and a parserless interface to continue a successful series. Like all *Police Quests*, the latest adventure is built from some of the actual experiences of Jim Walls and some of his fellow officers. One of the most impressive facts in the game is that players absolutely *must* use correct police procedures in order to succeed at the game. Add to this winning formula the improved graphics already mentioned and a soundtrack written by *Miami Vice* composer Jan Hammer and *Police Quest 3* seems certain to "arrest" the attention of experienced and novice adventure gamers alike.

✔ Role-Playing for Rebecca

From **Interplay Productions**, developers of the original *Bard's Tale* series, comes the *Bard's Tale Construction Set*. This creative tool allows players to design their own computer role-playing games using the familiar interface popularized by *The Bard's Tale*. While, in the past, there have been numerous construction kits for creating one's own text adventures and there have even been wargame and arcade game construction sets, this is the most powerful tool yet for designing professional-looking CRPGs.

Corporation (IBM, $49.99) has been called "*Dungeon Master* in space." To be sure, the **Virgin Games**' action/adventure offers the same first-person perspective as the fantasy CRPG, but features some interesting lighting effects, robots that "roll" from place to place instead of gliding and extremely smooth animation. Players assume the role of an interplanetary agent and attempt to stop the "ultimate killing machine" which the evil solar-system-wide "corporation" is reputed to be building.

Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus (IBM, $69.95) is **Accolade**'s sequel to *CGW*'s Role-Playing Game of the Year. The familiar first-person perspective (as in *Dungeon Master* and *Eye of the Beholder*) is present in the game, but the humor associated with the hostess of horror, the sheer size of the game (4,000 locations) and the clever magical (alchemical) system blend together with an



The Two Towers



Nighthawk F-117A

easy-to-use interface, eerie soundtrack and some horrific animation to create a CRPG of monstrous proportion.

Mindcraft's *The Magic Candle II: The Four and Forty* (IBM, $59.95) was originally described in *CGW* #84 p. 16. The product has been completely redrawn in VGA graphics since the sneak preview, however, and is expected to be ready for Christmas. Filled with mini-quests; an entire sub-routine for personnel management of player and non-player characters (we call it a game within a game); automapping; a notepad feature that keeps track of clues and character data and a fascinating story, *The Magic Candle II: The Four and Forty* looks like it will offer an even brighter flame than its ancestor (*The Magic Candle*, *CGW*'s Role-Playing Game of the Year in 1989).

Might & Magic III: Isles of Terra (IBM, $69.95) features atmospheric sound (sound cues which offer hints on proximity, strength of blows, power of magical spells and effect of telling blows), exciting graphics, a user interface that will not cause players to go blind reading the numbers and even a "Help me, Mr. Wizard" button that allows players to get out of trouble whenever they have gotten into trouble they cannot handle (at the cost of a character level). It originally looked as if *Might and Magic III* would be the ultimate "hack and slash" game of the Christmas season, but early returns from our reviewers indicate that it has the best story and most attention to characterization yet to appear in a *Might and Magic* product.

The Two Towers (IBM, $59.95) is the second release in **Interplay**'s *The Lord of the Rings* series of role-playing games. Many gamers disliked the "empty" feeling which the pacing of the first volume offered, so *The Two Towers* will feature "cliffhangers" and "cutaways" to give the story both a better narrative feel (regularly reminding the players as to what they are trying to accomplish in the game) and keeping the action moving. The first volume in the series offered plenty for gamers to do, but the time lapse between encounters was discouraging for many. Now, gamers should



Gunship 2000

be able to discover all the role-playing jewels the designers intended for them.

The final saga in **SSI**'s first *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* trilogy will draw to a close in *Pools of Darkness* (IBM, $59.95). Scorpia describes this game on page 94 of this issue.

Ultima VII: The Black Gate (IBM, $79.95) breathes new life into the *Ultima* series. The fictional and philosophical underpinning of the story (coming to grips with authentic evil), as well as the technological innovations inherent in the new system, will make this one of the most memorable *Ultimas*. See *CGW* #87 p. 40 for more information.

Simulations for Sammy

F-117A Nighthawk: Stealth Fighter 2.0 (IBM, $79.95) is more than an update. **Microprose**'s latest flight simulation offers a new flight model, more missions and more advanced graphics than its predecessor, *F-19 Stealth Fighter*. For more information, see the feature article on page 46 of this issue.

Gunship 2000 (IBM, $69.95) is another **Microprose** release which offers significant improvement over its predecessor. Now, computer pilots can participate in multiple-ship missions and more realistically prosecute the assigned combat missions. See the feature article on page 34 of this issue for further information.

As previewed in *CGW* #81 p. 16, **Three-Sixty**'s *Megafortress* (IBM, $49.95) is a flight simulation with a difference. It does not concentrate on fancy maneuvers with the plane, but places crew members at realistic combat stations of a modified, ultra-high-tech B-52. Based on the Dale Brown bestseller *Flight of the Old Dog*, *Megafortress* is a complex, detailed simulation that should appeal to players who are looking for a new challenge in modern air combat.

Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe (IBM, $69.95) was reviewed on page 120 of *CGW* #88. The latest product from Larry Holland is more of a simulation than the two aerial combat games which preceded it and the mission builder provides for computer game longevity by increasing the potential for variety according to the gamer's personal taste.

Strategy for Stan

Armada 2525 (IBM, $49.95) is another fine entry into the strategic space conquest genre of games long dominated by *Reach for the Stars*. With the support of a trilogy of articles in *CGW* (#87 p.100),

(Continued on page 78)

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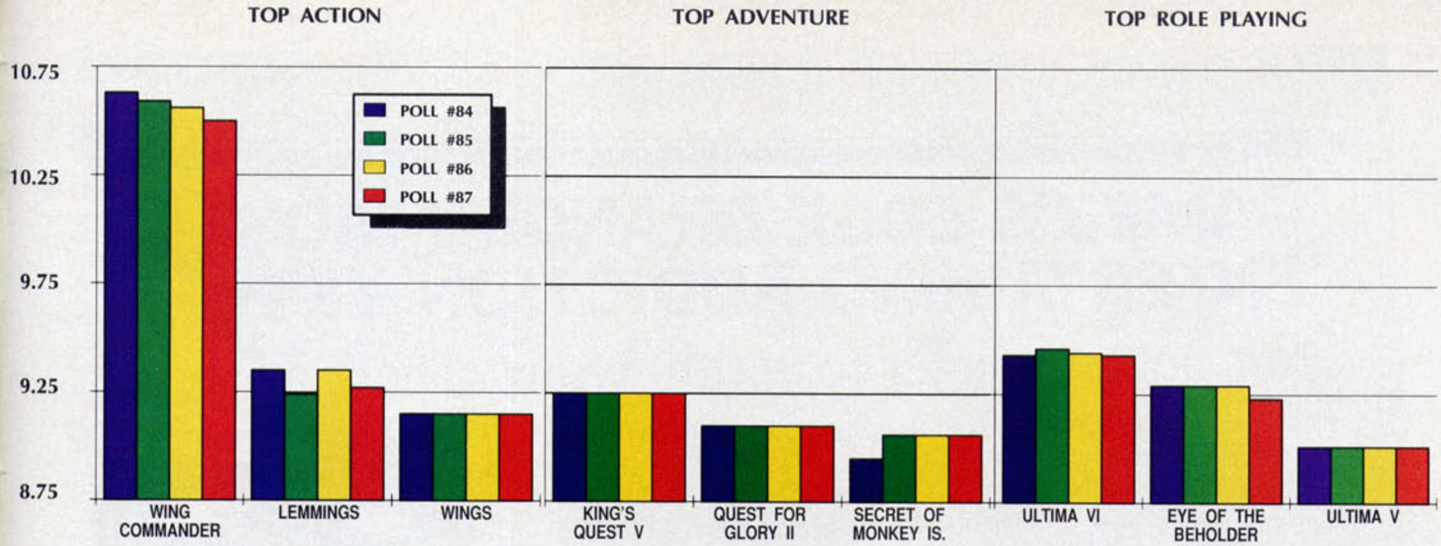
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Action/Arcade (AC):
Computer games that emphasize hand-eye coordination and reflexes.

Adventure (AD):
Games that allow you to take an alter ego through a storyline or series of events.

Role-Playing Adventure (RP):
Adventure games that are based on character development (usually involving attributes).

Top Ten Games

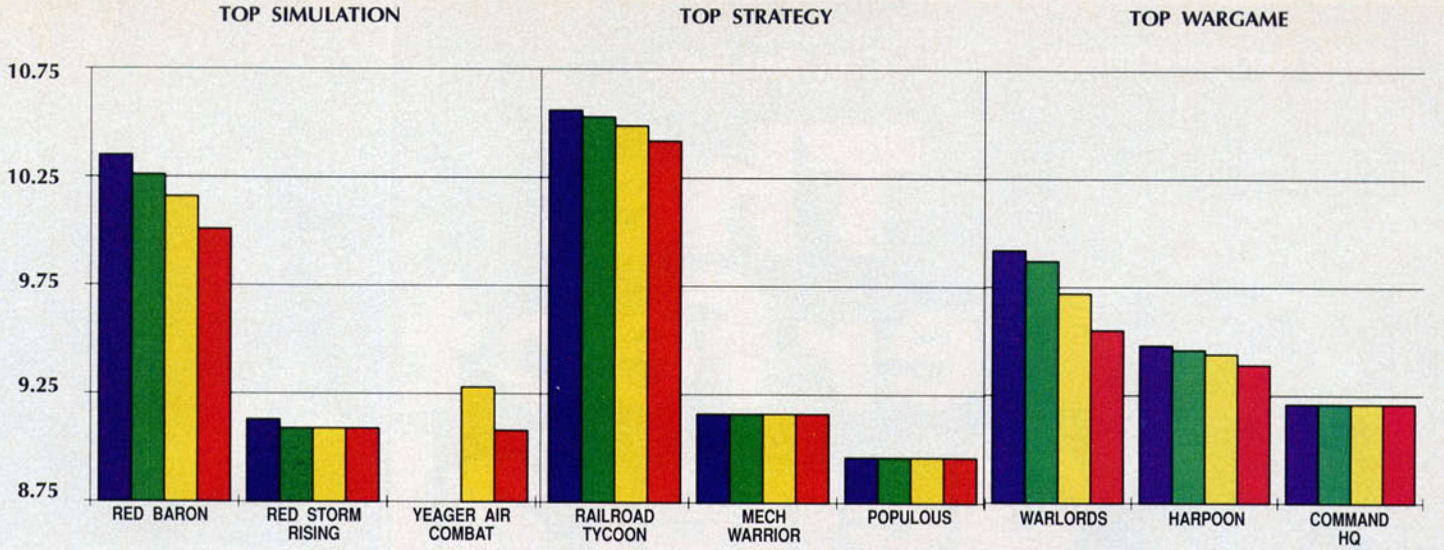
Game Title, Rating
Source, Category

No.	Game Title	Source	Category	Rating
1	**Wing Commander**	**Origin**	AC	10.50
2	**Railroad Tycoon**	**M'prose**	ST	10.42
3	**Red Baron**	**Dynamix**	SI	10.01
4	**Warlords**	**SSG**	WG,ST	9.55
5	**Ultima VI**	**Origin**	RP	9.43
6	**Harpoon**	**Three-Sixty**	WG	9.39
7	**Lemmings**	**Psygnosis**	AC	9.27
8	**King's Quest V**	**Sierra**	AD	9.25
9	**Eye of the Beholder**	**SSI**	RP	9.23
10	**Command HQ**	**Microplay**	WG,ST	9.21

The CGW

No.	Name	Source	Category	Rating
11	Second Front	SSI	WG	9.17
12	Mech Warrior	Activision	ST,SI	9.16
13	Wings	Cinemaware	AC	9.15
14	Quest for Glory II	Sierra	AD,RP	9.10
15	Red Storm Rising	Microprose	SI	9.09
16	Chuck Yeager's Air Combat	Electronic Arts	SI	9.08
	Silent Service II	Microprose	SI	9.08
18	The Secret of Monkey Island	Lucasfilm	AD	9.06
19	Battlehawks 1942	Lucasfilm	AC,SI	9.05
20	Ultima V	Origin	RP	9.01
21	Space Quest IV	Sierra	AD	9.00
	Quest for Glory	Sierra	RP	9.00
23	Space Quest III	Sierra	AD	8.97
	Sword of Aragon	SSI	WG,ST	8.97
25	Populous	Electronic Arts	ST	8.96
	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms	Koei	ST,RP	8.96
27	Wasteland	Electronic Arts	RP	8.95
28	Bane of the Cosmic Forge	Sir-Tech	RP	8.94
29	Overrun	SSI	WG	8.93
30	Falcon	Spectrum Holobyte	SI	8.90
31	Martian Dreams	Origin	RP	8.89
32	NFL Challenge	XOR Corporation	ST	8.87
	Indianapolis 500	Electronic Arts	SI	8.87
34	Elvira	Accolade	RP	8.82
35	Power Monger	Electronic Arts	ST	8.81
	Might & Magic II	New World	RP	8.81
37	The Magic Candle	Mindcraft	RP	8.80
	LHX Attack Chopper	Electronic Arts	AC	8.80
	Rise of the Dragon	Dynamix/Sierra	AD	8.80
40	Bard's Tale III	Electronic Arts	RP	8.77
41	Bandit Kings	Koei	ST,RP	8.75
42	Covert Action	Microprose	AC,AD	8.73
	Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf	Accolade	ST	8.73
44	Battles of Napoleon	SSI	WG	8.72
	Battlechess	Interplay	ST	8.72
46	Breach 2	Omnitrend	ST,RP	8.71
	Starflight II	Electronic Arts	RP	8.71
	Heart of China	Dynamix	AD	8.71
49	Neuromancer	Interplay	AD	8.70
50	F-15 Strike Eagle II	Microprose	SI	8.69
51	Typhoon of Steel	SSI	WG	8.67
	Curse of the Azure Bonds	SSI	RP	8.67
53	Indiana Jones/Graphic Adv.	Lucasfilm	AD	8.65
	Ballistyx	Psygnosis	AC	8.65
55	Wayne Gretzky Hockey	Bethesda	AC,ST	8.62

Games are often listed in more than one category. In this case, the first listed category is considered primary. In order



Simulation (SI):
Games based on first-person perspectives of real-world environments.

Strategy (ST):
Games that emphasize strategic planning and problem-solving.

Wargames (WG):
Simulations of historical or futuristic warfare from a command perspective.

Poll

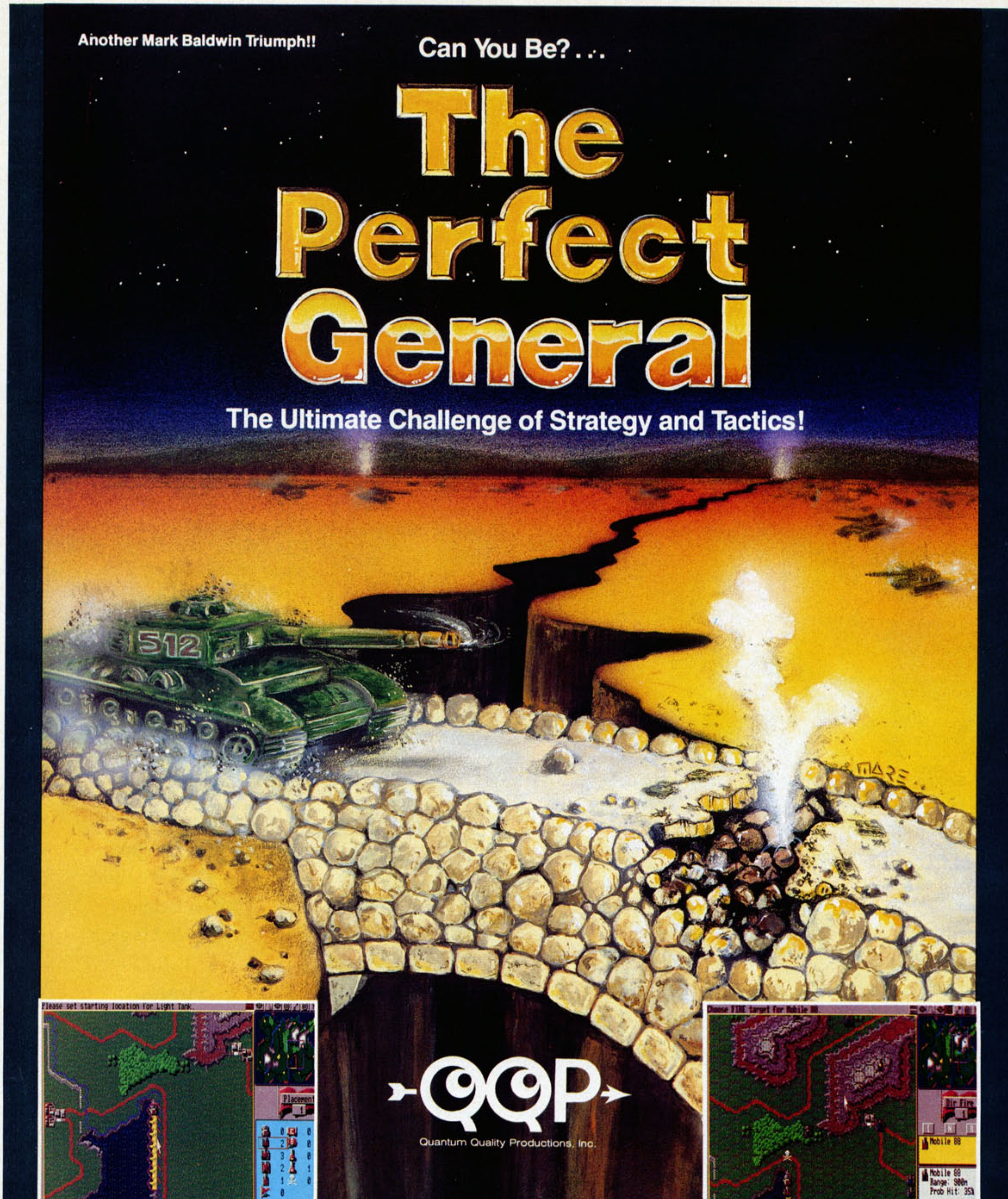
No.	Name	Source	Category	Rating
56	Action Stations	RAW Entertainment	WG	8.61
	Pool of Radiance	SSI	RP	8.61
58	King's Quest IV	Sierra	AD	8.59
59	Buck Rogers	SSI	RP	8.57
60	Chessmaster 2100	Software Toolworks	ST	8.56
61	Genghis Khan	Koei	ST,RP	8.54
62	Future Wars	Interplay	AD	8.53
63	Panzer Strike	SSI	WG	8.51
	Champions of Krynn	SSI	RP	8.51
	Leisure Suit Larry III	Sierra	AD	8.51
	Sword of the Samurai	Microprose	ST,RP	8.51
67	Savage Empire	Origin	RP	8.48
68	Manhunter 2	Sierra	AD	8.42
69	Nobunaga's Ambition II	Koei	ST,RP	8.40
70	TV Sports Football	Cinemaware	AC,ST	8.39
71	Strike Fleet	Electronic Arts	WG	8.37
72	Jetfighter II	Velocity	SI	8.35
73	Fire Brigade	Panther	WG	8.34
74	BattleTech II: Revenge	Infocom	WG,RP	8.33
75	Rocket Ranger	Cinemaware	AC,AD	8.32
76	Nobunaga's Ambition	Koei	ST,RP	8.30
77	Drakkhen	Data East	RP	8.27
	688 Attack Sub	Electronic Arts	SI,ST	8.27
79	Lord of the Rings	Interplay	RP	8.26
80	Manhunter	Sierra	AD	8.25
81	Centurion	Electronic Arts	ST	8.24
82	Police Quest	Sierra	AD	8.23
83	Starglider II	Microplay	AC,SI	8.22
84	Jack Nickluas Greatest 18	Accolade	ST	8.21
	Three Stooges	Cinemaware	AC	8.21
86	Ishido	Accolade	ST	8.20
	Search for the King	Accolade	AD	8.20
	Leisure Suit Larry II	Sierra	AD	8.20
89	Flight Simulator 4.0	Microsoft	SI	8.18
	Loom	Lucasfilm	AD	8.18
91	Abrams Battle Tank	Electronic Arts	AC,SI	8.16
92	The Colonel's Bequest	Sierra	AD	8.14
93	Tetris	Spectrum Holobyte	AC	8.13
	BattleChess II: Chinese Chess	Interplay	ST	8.13
	Full Metal Planet	Data East	ST	8.13
96	Conquest of Camelot	Sierra	AD	8.12
97	Secret of the Silver Blades	SSI	RP	8.02
98	Timequest	Legend	AD	7.68
99	A-10 Tank Killer	Dynamix	SI	7.34
100	Hard Nova	Electronic Arts	RP,AC	7.20

Hall of Fame

The Games in CGW's Hall of Fame Have Been Highly Rated by our Readers over Time. They are Worthy of Play by All.

Bard's Tale I
Chessmaster
Dungeon Master
Earl Weaver Baseball
Empire
F19 Stealth Fighter
Gettysburg
Gunship
Kampfgruppe
M-1 Tank Platoon
Mech Brigade
Might & Magic
M.U.L.E.
Pirates
SimCity
Starflight
Their Finest Hour
Ultima III
Ultima IV
War in Russia
Wizardry

to be recognized as the "Top Game" in a given category, a game must be listed as being primarily of that specific type.

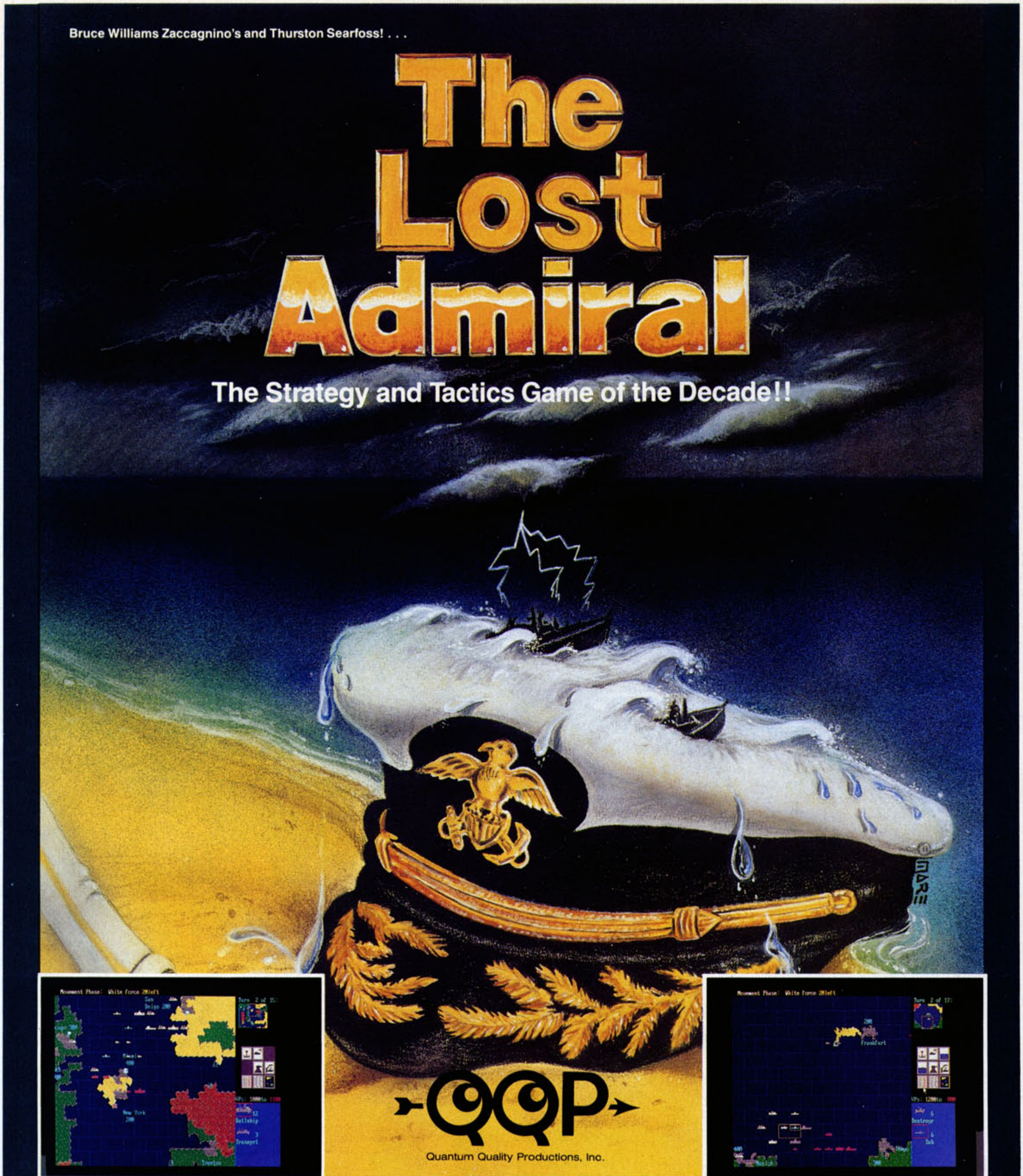


This game is based on a twelve year old tournament series and includes a highly refined yet simple playing system.

- Gorgeous playing field and landscapes.
- Clean and simple interface.
- Two difficulty levels.

- You control every move and fire of your forces.
- Superior artificial intelligence.
- One or two players, human or computer, plus play by modem.
- A wide range of intriguing scenarios.
- The thrill and sounds of artillery, tanks and infantry in action.

"The Perfect General" computer game is IBM PC and Amiga compatible. It can be obtained through your favorite retailer or ordered direct by calling:
1-908-788-2799.



You're an admiral who was dismissed from the service and exiled from your homeland on trumped-up charges. You're given another chance by an old friend who's the head-of-state of a world power.

Can you meet the challenge and regain your admiral's rank?

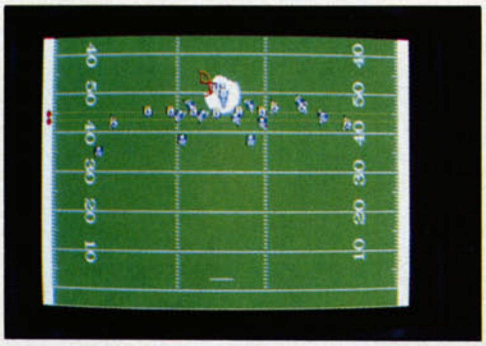
- 9 superb scenarios.
- 1 random map scenario, with virtually millions of maps.
- 15 campaign games.
- Flagships with special abilities (In campaigns only).
- The challenge of a very strong artificial intelligence.
- An in depth officer's ranking system.
- A thorough history of your combat endeavors.
- Play either side against another human or a computer.

"The Lost Admiral" computer game is IBM PC compatible. It can be obtained through your favorite retailer or ordered direct by calling: 1-908-788-2799.

Circle Reader Service #73

Christmas Buying Guide

(Continued from page 72)



NFL Pro Football

Armada puts a special emphasis on technology and R&D in addition to empire-building. For 0-6 players (with multiple humans playing at the same machine only), **Interstel**'s latest features clean mechanics and an elegant playing structure well supported by a diversity of strategic elements to be mastered.

Interplay's first expansion disk for *Castles*, *Castles Campaign Disk #1* (IBM, $29.95) features several welcome changes. The economics are more sophisticated, in that players must choose which commodities to invest in and the seasons have an even more devastating effect upon one's serfs and lords than they did in the original game. For the first time, female monarchs can have an image of themselves that is not male and there are even more dialogues/situations to which the player's monarch can react.

Six thousand years of history is fashioned into an absorbing exercise in game play when veteran game designer Sid Meier publishes *Civilization* (IBM, $69.95) under the **Microprose** label. *Civilization*, as previewed on page 86 of this issue, is a clear successor to Sid's earlier hit *Railroad Tycoon*. It has a "god game" feel to it, since one raises one's tribe of people through city building, technological development (from the wheel to superconducters), diplomacy, trade, revolutions and war. Anyone who took to trains because of *Railroad Tycoon* is sure to "dig" history while playing *Civilization*.

Perhaps one could call the next game "**QQP** at sea," but its actual name is *The Lost Admiral* (IBM, $59.95). As previewed last issue, this naval strategy game is very like the classic *Empire* in feel and addictiveness. With set scenarios, campaign games and random map features, *Lost Admiral* really shines with its computer opponent's playing ability. Players will have their hands more than full at levels three and four of the eleven levels of computer competence. This product has an elegant system placed in a compelling game which is well worth a few salvoes.

NFL Football is a brilliantly executed football strategy game from **Micro Sports** (IBM, $79.95). The game is so incredibly detailed that one can get a play-by-play printout which names the ball carriers, tacklers or would-be receivers and delineates the result. The game is a dream for computer coaches and statis-



Playmaker Football



Battle Isle

tics freaks. For those who want to play in a computer league, but cannot get together with enough football fans to keep one going, the game even offers a modem feature that is supported on the **USA Today Sports Network** on-line service.

Those who wish to have football strategy without being tied to NFL statistics will want to check out *Playmaker Football* from **Broderbund** (IBM, Macintosh, $49.95). The game allows would-be coaches to build teams and playbooks from the ground up, using dozens of statistics and one of the most advanced AI systems we have ever seen implemented in a computer strategy game. The animation is extremely smooth, as well, and the program even allows those who want to try their hand at influencing the on-field action to intervene via a *deus ex (mouse)ina*.

Romance of the Three Kingdoms II is an update of **Koei**'s award-winning strategy game (*CGW*'s Strategy Game of the Year in 1989) on ancient China. Although gamers who like fast-paced action may not like it, the necessities of building one's economic base, engaging in diplomatic posturing (marriages and treaties in particular), rewarding one's subordinate leaders, spying on neighboring provinces and resolving battles by means of simple, boardgame-style hexagon-map conquest offer plenty of satisfaction for careful, dedicated strategy gamers. The new version offers improved graphics, **AdLib** sound support, tougher artificial opponents and the potential for "magic" through the random discovery of mystic artifacts.



Patton Strikes Back

Tony La Russa Ultimate Baseball ($59.95) from **Strategic Simulations, Inc.** may well be the heir apparent to the best all-around computer baseball game. It offers plenty of statistical features, impressive graphics, and some refinements to traditional arcade play. See the feature article in *CGW* #88 p. 104 for more details.

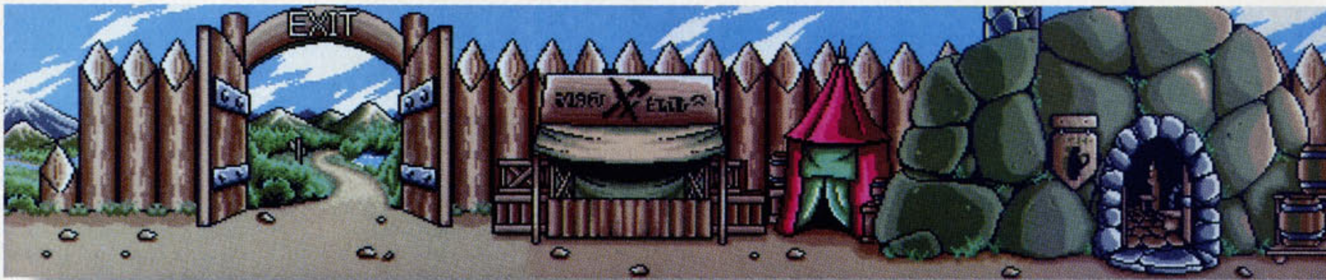
Spectrum HoloByte's *Wordtris* (IBM, $44.95; see the article on page 102 of this issue for more details) combines the intensity of the best-selling action game *Tetris* with the mental agility required to solve crosswords, score well at *Scrabble* and use letters multiple times in *Upwords*.

✔ Wargames for Wally

Battle Isle (Amiga, IBM, $49.95) is **Ubisoft**'s answer to a gamer's desire for a "beer and pretzels" wargame. The game is described on page 84 of this issue and is one of the few releases to be published initially for the Amiga during the current holiday season.

Finally, a strategic Napoleonic wargame is coming out for the personal computer. Oddly, though, it's not an American design or even a European one. *L'Empereur* (IBM, $59.95) has that hint of samurai flavor found in all of **Koei**'s strategy and wargames. Using a point-to-point movement system (instead of their tried-and-true area movement system), the leaders, production and combat all have the same feel as other games from this publisher. More exhaustive trade and diplomacy rules open up new possibilities and, while the history section in the documentation is a far cry from Chandler, at least such noteworthy personalities as Fouché are included in the game.

Rightly billed as "the wargame for the rest of us," *Patton Strikes Back* (IBM, Macintosh $59.95) from **Broderbund** takes players to The Battle of the Bulge during the winter of 1944. Using a simple point, click and play interface, units are maneuvered over the particularly attractive map as graphic icons. The icon-based troop disposition is as easy to interpret as the game is engaging. The game's simple rules are clearly explained



A panoramic first-person view awaits your return to town.



Realistic 3-D dungeon mazes challenge your skill.



Vast hordes of hideous creatures lurk in the darkness.

There's nothing li
to put the real wo

Shining in the Darkness™ from Sega™ Genesis™ is a role-playing challenge so real, you don't just play it—you live it. This 8-meg game with battery back-up uses 16-bit Genesis graphics to give you a true first-person perspective. So you'll battle your way to victory from the most dramatic position of all: the hero's point of view.

Feel the stone walls close in as you race through the corridors of realistic 3-D dungeon mazes. Danger lurks behind each corner in your quest to pass the tests of the Ancients and become a shining knight. Lightning-fast scrolling action whisks you from battle to battle for non-stop action.

Will your skill and cunning prevail over







Master the perils of the Labyrinth to become a shining knight.

ke a good fantasy rld in perspective.

lethal cave slugs, slime monsters, ghouls, and other adversaries too hideous to imagine? Can you capture the powerful Arms of Light and vanquish the forces of Dark Sol to free the enchanted Kingdom of Thornwood?

You'll find the help you need in town, where purveyors of weapons, armor, and friendly advice await your return from battle in a panoramic setting. But once you head back into the Labyrinth, you're on your own.

So prepare for a challenge so real, it'll test your courage, your skill, and a whole lot more.

You're looking at a brilliant new path to glory—and it's Shining in the Darkness.

SEGA GENESIS

Leading the 16-bit revolution.™

Circle Reader Service #76



The Perfect General



F-22 Interceptor

and one can even access "mini movies" (that teach the history of the battle) during the course of play. *Patton Strikes Back* is not only an enjoyable battle of wits, but also a fascinating lesson in history from award-winning game designer Chris Crawford.

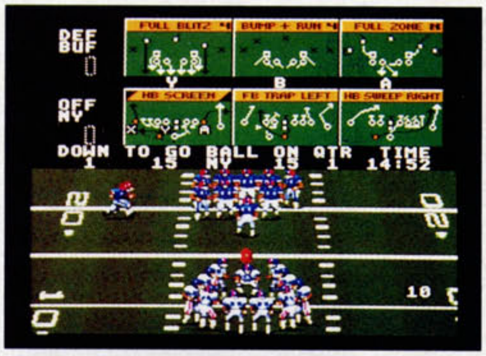
The Perfect General from **QQP** (IBM, $59.95) is a classic hex boardgame, translated and enhanced for computer play. An abstract tactical WWII game of tanks, infantry, artillery, etc., the players maneuver around pleasing VGA maps through a variety of very challenging and well tested scenarios. With full modem capabilities and sound support, *The Perfect General* is a cozy, comfortable wargame with enough splash and panache to turn initial interest into years of replay value.

V Is For Victory: Battle Set #1: Utah Beach is the first in a series of wargames to be released by **Three-Sixty Pacific** on the Macintosh format ($59.95). This series of computer wargames really builds off of the 30+ years of board wargaming history and synthesizes the best of classic board wargames with state-of-the-art computer wargaming features including a look and feel for the map and units that could please even the most jaded wargaming palette. If there is paper wargamer on your Christmas list who has always "pooh-poohed" computer wargames, this one should change his or her mind.

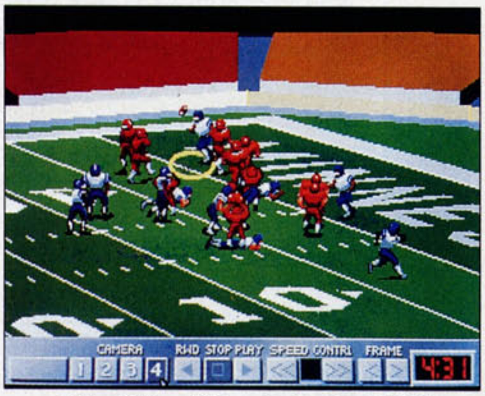
SSI (IBM, Amiga $59.95) has just unveiled the sequel to perhaps the most "diehard" wargame ever programmed for personal computers, *Second Front*. *Western Front*, from designer Gary Grigsby, takes the players through WWII from Berlin to Bordeaux and London to Naples through the last year of the war. Hitler's "Festung Europa" is much easier to assault thanks to the new mouse interface and the increased levels of player control for production and aerial campaigns. Not for the casual wargamer, *Western Front* is a must for serious students of military history.

Game Cartridges For Gary

F-22 Interceptor from **Electronic Arts** (Sega Genesis, $49.95) proves that the



John Madden Football



Mike Ditka Ultimate Football (PC)

new generation of game machine is equipped to handle a true simulation with polygon-filled graphics. The game simulates aerial combat action for the Advanced Tactical Fighter design which was *not* accepted, as well as offering missions with a production model F/A-18 Hornet. *F-22 Interceptor* is a *big* game that features plenty of value.

John Madden Football (Super Nintendo, no price set by Nintendo as of this printing; Sega, $49.95) is another **Electronic Arts** sports game that has made the successful transition from disk-based computer platform to dedicated game machine. The interface is simpler than the original computer-based command structure and the action flows more smoothly as a result. The animation is considerably better than the original **Apple** version and it still offers excellent options for strategy players.

Mike Ditka Ultimate Football (Sega Genesis, $49.95, IBM, $54.95) is **Accolade**'s answer to other action-based football games. The interface is reminiscent of other games, but the game features the digitized voice of veteran referee Jim Tunney (familiar to all television sports viewers) and a passing mode that enables players to "freeze" the game until a receiver is located (and then pass the ball). Thus far, it is the easiest football game in which to complete a long pass. In addition, the game features an interface for kicking and punting that will remind players of *Jack Nicklaus Ultimate Golf* and require just as much skill.

NHL Hockey (Sega Genesis) was covered in *CGW* #86 p. 102 and was the first sports game on a dedicated game machine platform that *CGW*'s staff thought should be converted to a multi-purpose computer. The only things this great statistics-based action game is missing are the ability to have league play, customize teams and print out statistics.

Phantasy Star III: Generations of Doom (Sega Genesis, $79.95) is one of the reasons that CRPGers are beginning to purchase the **Genesis**. **Sega**'s popular role-playing adventures offer plot and discovery as well as "hack and slash." The game features more "action" feel than most diehard computer gamers will want, but has more depth than many traditional computer games with weak plots and limited role-playing elements.

Toejam & Earl is another **Sega** title (Sega Genesis, $59.95). While it is not the standard *CGW* gamer's fare, it is a wild and whimsical game that is more innovative than plenty of the traditional computer games that we examine in the course of a year. By veteran computer game designer Greg Johnson (*Starflight* and *Caveman Ugh-lympics*), the game features action, exploration, discovery and a modicum of strategy. While it is not the most cerebral of games covered in the survey, it is certainly one that is very entertaining.

Better Watch Out

So, those who call themselves computer gamers had better watch out and better not pout, because the software publisher "Santa"s are coming to town with an even larger assortment of Christmas toys for all of us "good" (well, maybe, not *quite* so good) "little" (well, maybe *not* so little) "girls and boys" (after all, we're all "children" at heart during the holidays). **CGW**

An Ocean, an Island and a War

UBI Soft's Battle Isle



by Allen L. Greenberg



In the minds of strategy gamers, somewhere between their imaginary favorites *Continents of Conquest* and *Sea-periority* would come a land of war and maneuver: a place like *Battle Isle*. The goal of *Battle Isle* is standard military fare—either to eliminate all of the opposing player's fighting units or to capture his headquarters. The combatants may be either two players against each other or one player against the computer. The setting is one of a series of increasingly complex islands through which a player progresses each time a victory is scored. The islands range in size, beginning with one so minute that it might have once belonged to the celebrated Gilligan and continuing up toward one which most resembles Europe. The victory occurs when a player is given a positive enough performance rating to earn a password to the next scenario (island). The lines are drawn and the battle begins....

Hardware Wars

Battle Isle contains a huge variety of automated combat vehicles which range in size from a simple tank to a monstrous floating fortress. These machines are scattered throughout the playing area as the scenario opens, with the greatest concentration near each side's headquarters. Major roadways leading toward that building are also well-protected, although non-paved terrain causes no problem for most of the land vehicles. In the more advanced scenarios, flotillas of all sizes punctuate the waterways and groups of aircraft also stand ready for takeoff. There is apparently no way for the player to initially position these units himself; thus, customizing the scenario does not appear to be an option. Not all types of weaponry, buildings or features are available on every island, either, adding a bit mystery to the game.

In addition to one's headquarters, various depots and factories also occupy the island. Only factories are able to produce new combatants, while other buildings are used to store and repair existing units. Depots may be built by a special non-combatant vehicle known as Merlin. The energy required to accomplish all these tasks is provided by a natural element called *alindium*, which is found in outcroppings scattered over the terrain. The stuff is brought into headquarters by a transport vehicle called a Provider, which is also capable of some limited combat. Buildings, including headquarters, may only be captured by the game's one humanoid participant, a robot "Demon." When this happens, a clever piece of animation depicts the robot breaking in the front door. Demons may also hitch a ride in the Provider alongside the alindium.

Heavy Metal Inventory

Several tanks are available, the lightest being the FAV (Fast Attack Vehicle) Buster, which is most effective from a distance. Scorpion, Gladiator and Crusader are increasingly heavy tanks, each built for nastier battles (although the latter suffers from reduced mobility). Three mobile artillery units, Angel, Blitz and Sphinx, provide protection at varying distances and generally require some time before they can be put into operation.

Mosquito is *Battle Isle*'s only air-to-air fighter and is particularly vulnerable from ground attack. Against ground targets, the Raven is used, whose cannon, missiles and bombs can blast open armor like an airborne can opener. Giant is the airborne transport vehicle, which can carry up to seven of even the largest tanks. This monstrous flying luggage-rack is also capable of taking off and landing without the use of an airstrip! The game's only helicopter is Firebird, which is armed with cannon fire, air-to-surface missiles and FFARs (Folding-Fin Aerial Rockets). It's less maneuverable than the Mosquito but is also better protected.

Fleets o' Strength

In the water, the hovercraft Invader is used to initiate ground assaults. The Buccaneer is a mine-sweeping boat which is also capable of deploying the explosive devices, including those which are former possessions of the enemy. The mines, or Bricks, can be used to block port entrances in a short time. Bricks are also found blocking access routes on land.

Also on the water is the very fast and very accurate Marauder hydrofoil, the heavily armored Amazon transport boat and the completely invisible, torpedo-carrying Barracuda. Adding strength to the fleet is the Pegasus, an aircraft carrier which is capable of transporting and repairing up to seven aircraft at one time. Easily the most intimidating force in the water, however, is the Fortress. This giant platform is not only capable of destroying anything within a wide range with frighteningly little effort, but it is also self-repairing and probably carries a 6-century/50,000-world warranty (whichever disappears into eternity first).

Map Relief

Battle Isle unfolds on a highly detailed relief map that depicts the topography in keen, almost three-dimensional detail. A sharp-witted ballistics decorator, in an-

ticipation of the mayhem destined to take place there, has carved the traditional wargaming hexagonal pattern directly into this realistic landscape. The many types of combat vehicles, ships and aircraft are unique in appearance and highly stylized.

The screen is divided into two halves, each of which is under the control of one player. Using the joystick, each player may scroll his half of the screen to whichever portion of the island he is interested in observing or to which he is giving orders. Unfortunately, any "secret" information will not remain so for the player who simply watches his opponent's side of the screen.

The Look and Feel of Mayhem

Players input their orders simultaneously. While one player gives instructions for movement, the other gives orders to attack. When, by mutual consent, the last order has been entered, a tap of the space bar ends the turn. At turn's end, one half of the screen displays each pair of enemies which have been ordered into combat. The other half of the screen shows an animated sequence in which the opposing forces roll into formation and fire away at each other. The number of vehicles (or the lack thereof) which appear during this animation reflects how much damage each unit has accumulated. The results of this combat are, for the most part, consistent from trial to trial, although some small variation in the number of vehicles left standing does occur.

All orders are given using the joystick. Pressing the fire button gives the player access to a number of specialized icons. During both attack and movement phases, selecting one of these icons causes all hexagons that represent valid targets of a particular unit to become highlighted until the player makes his selection. Another icon will cause the player's screen to zoom out over the entire playing area and display all units which have not yet received orders. Similarly, players may instantly receive information about their own or an enemy unit, as well as the occupants of carriers and buildings.

My Kingdom for a Mouse

Inexplicably, **Ubisoft** will not support a mouse interface in *Battle Isle*. This is odd in that not only is the mouse a much less clumsy tool than a joystick for selecting icons and indicating choices on a map, but it is also by far the most popular input device for the Amiga, the initial computer for which *Battle Isle* is being written. Without the use of their favorite rodent, many players of both the IBM and Amiga versions may be unhappy with the game.

Battle Isle's greatest appeals, however, include its vivid graphic display and, once one gets over the casualty of the mouse, its easy, rapid-fire input of commands. For relatively uncomplicated war, strategy and devastation, it may turn out to be a very attractive package. Perhaps not hard enough for "hardcore wargamers" due to its abstractions and joystick interface, but certainly entertaining to more relaxed strategy gamers who enjoyed *Herzog Zwei* or *The Lost Admiral* and, as a result, might want to open a bag of chips and a soda, then head for the bunker. **CGW**

Making the Best of All Possible Worlds

A Preview of Sid Meier's Civilization

by Alan Emrich





While Rome wasn't built in a day, the decline and fall of the Roman Empire only takes a good day's worth of play in this latest offering from **Microprose**. As an evolutionary step from *Railroad Tycoon*, Sid Meier's new game progresses from his fertile mind to the "fertile crescent" in *Civilization*, another one of those "compulsive-addictive" games that one can easily stay up until 4:00 AM playing and ends up thinking about constantly when *not* playing.

Sid Earth

In the beginning, Sid Meier (with Bruce Shelley) creates the Earth. Right away, players are thrown into the game with its opening menus. Players can play on the actual Earth, a randomly generated planet with Earth's "specs," or set their own parameters for a habitable word orbiting an G-type star. These "custom" planets are particularly enjoyable, for while every planet is the same size (in terms of the number of map squares horizontally and vertically), the amount which is land versus ocean can be adjusted, as can the overall climate, temperature and the planet's age. (The younger the planet, the more dense its terrain features will be—i.e., large jungles or deserts as opposed to nearby diverse terrain in surrounding areas.)

The computer spends a bit of time generating the world and filling it with various logical and aesthetically pleasing terrain designs. There are a dozen different terrain types with "special resource" squares sprinkled throughout the board (oil, gold, gems, coal, gold, fish, game, etc.). The purpose of terrain is to allow players to find suitable city sites, build cities there and exploit the land. Naturally, cities founded near fertile rivers and grasslands will fare better in terms of growth than those on arctic and tundra squares, but cities on hills and mountains make excellent defensive strongholds despite their "slow growth" terrain.

Sid City

The game begins with each "player" (although, as in *Railroad Tycoon*, there can be only *one* human player who must compete against from 2-6 other computer players) having a single caravan of settlers roaming the land in search of a suitable city site. Once a city is founded, urban management quickly becomes the "game within the game" in *Civilization*. The player must allot the city's available labor to work the nearby land by irrigating, mining and building roads, or pull them off the land to create a class of "elite" citizenry within the city itself.

As the land is worked, food (symbolized by wheat stalks), resources (or "shields") and trade ("arrows") are produced. Optimally, food is produced in surplus to the city's basic consumption need, with the excess stored in the city's "food box." When filled, this box is emptied and the city grows by another point. With each increase in population, the amount of food required to fill the food box increases, and by discovering pottery (and building a granary), the food box is only half emptied each time the population increases.

Resources (symbolized by shields) equal a city's production output. In order to "buy" a city improvement (such as a temple, military unit or even a wonder of the world), a commitment must be made in resources. The city's resource box continues to fill until the unit is actually purchased. Spending money can hasten the purchase of items, but since for each shield still required to build an item *two* coins must be spent, the savings in time could ruin one's economy if this form of "emergency production" is used too often.

The trade units generated by a city's roads and waterways actually become one of three things, as determined by the player. Each trade unit either converts to a "coin" (i.e., money, based on the player's tax rate), a "diamond" (i.e., a luxury item required to keep citizens content, based on the player's luxury rate) or a "light bulb" (i.e., a unit of research towards the next technology advance based on whatever trade is not consumed by either taxes or the production of luxury items). Since money is required on a per turn basis in order to maintain one's city improvements, and luxury items, in turn, keep the urban populace from revolt, it is often difficult to balance a society's need for long term R&D ("light bulbs") against urgent, turn-by-turn social demands. To make matters worse, depending on one's current type of government (despotism, monarchy, republic, etc.), a certain amount of trade units are lost to "corruption," depending on the city's distance from the player's capital (palace).

Citizens not working the land to produce the food, resources and trade required for prosperity can become "elite citizens." These "Ubervolk" come in three flavors; the taxman (who creates additional coins from the city each turn), Einstein (who produces additional light bulbs each turn) and the ever popular Elvis (who will constantly be putting down revolts by creating the luxuries required to alleviate discontent among the urban

populace). Often a society will have a pressing need for one of these commodities. For example, a war needs money so that military units can be purchased quickly. Having enemies with superior technology might call for every citizen possible to become an Einstein for a while. Likewise, the fall of one's capitol or a revolution causing widespread discontent creates a pressing need for "Elvi". Thus, the super citizens are there for the instant reward at the cost of some long-term growth for the city as the fields lay fallow from the drafting of farmers into the "elite citizen corps."

The People Are Revolting

Civilization can be played at five different difficulty levels (from Chieftain to Emperor). This affects computer opponent hostility (and "cheats"/"handicaps" bestowed the computer player), but—equally important—varies the level of tolerance the populace has for the player. The easier the game, the more people who will fill a city before new citizens begin to be born "unhappy." If there are more unhappy people than "wealthy" people to offset their numbers, a city goes into revolt. In this, the "Sid City" portion of the game, dealing with revolts becomes an ongoing aspect of game play. There are many ways to appease the masses. Raising the luxury rate will make people happy throughout one's civilization (at a cost in light bulbs produced each turn). Temples, cathedrals, courthouses and coliseums can be built. "Elvi" can be created. Settlers can be created (which removes a point of unhappy population from the city), one's type of government can be switched and even certain wonders of the world might help to restore order. Due to the frequency of urban revolt, however, every tool in the toolbox will be required to keep a lid on unrest. Players are advised that "smart play" is to be diligent yet creative in dealing with revolts.

Reinventing the Wheel

Advancing one's civilization is one of the few ways that *Sid Meier's Civilization* compares to the popular **Avalon Hill** boardgame, *Civilization*. In the boardgame, one saves up to buy Civilization Cards such as pottery, medicine, iron working, etc. Owning some cards makes acquiring others easier, so the evolution of discoveries progresses along fairly logical lines. In *Sid Meier's Civilization*, these same advances are purchased via light bulbs (scientific R&D), with each new discovery costing more than its predecessor and specific prerequisites required before higher levels of technology can be reached. For instance, the discovery of "Advanced Flight" *requires* about forty previous discoveries (including such "oldies" as the alphabet, mysticism and bridge building). A vast, interwoven complex of discoveries, many of which are prerequisites for later discoveries, is built into the game and adds much to its richness and replay value. Interestingly, players are informed of many key events in the game by the same type of "newspaper" headline graphics which were also used in *Railroad Tycoon*.

The press aside, time is also an important concept in *Civilization*. Since the game covers an era from 4000 BC to the colonizing of Alpha Centauri (roughly 2000 AD), it would take a lot of 1-year turns to complete a game. Fortunately, early on, each game turn represents 20 years, which is later reduced to 10, 5, 3,



2 and finally 1 year per turn. This compressing of the time scale gives the activities of civilizations across the millennia the right "feel" throughout the game, although it *is* difficult to imagine all of WWII as lasting less than 10 turns. The player will find there are more drawn-out Punic and 100-Years type wars to be conducted than quick little 7-Years wars and Koreas. Interestingly, in the beta version playtested, a player will never face the threat of a serious civil war (even at the toughest levels) since cities which revolt never build military units which must be crushed, no matter how badly treated or ignored they are. Considering their significance in history, this writer is hopeful that civil wars will get their due in the final version of the game.

Will Wonders Never Cease?

A major object of the game is to build the highly expensive, long-term "wonders of the world." There are seven ancient, seven medieval (and renaissance) and seven modern wonders of the world. Building them not only raises one's final game score by an impressive amount, but also give the player a certain long-term special advantage over other civilizations. For instance, building the Colossus, since everyone came to marvel at it, greatly increases trade at that city. Discovering the cure for cancer helps to keep everybody happy. The older wonders, however, are often made obsolete. For instance, Shakespeare's Theater ceases to provide its benefit of making people happy in that city once the discovery of electricity is made (with radio and television the presumed culprits). An important part of one's playing strategy, therefore, is knowing what "special powers" each wonder possesses and building them, in the right place and at the right time, to take best advantage. The sacrifice is enormous, but the long-term benefits can be also.

On War

In the movie *Patton*, our hero says "Next to war, all other forms of human endeavor shrink to insignificance." In many way, *Civilization* proves this out. The nature of human happiness and prosperity is a struggle for excellence, not equality, and so it is that one must develop the technologies and military resources to insure his "place in the sun." The struggle for excellence in *Civilization* is not conducted on a purely military basis, however, for politics and economics are also closely related. Still, almost every aspect of the game seems to connect to a military application. Even the criteria for winning the game is biased in favor of the world conqueror over the stellar colonizer!

The secret is to know thy neighbors. Computer-controlled civilizations are all competing for ascendency, so knowing who can be bullied (like the Egyptians' Ramses), who can bribed (like the Americans' Lincoln) and who must be fought (like the Mongols' Genghis) is clearly "history lesson one." The beta software played by this writer, however, had no options for "random personalities" for the different leaders, so one's diplomatic play style can become pretty set after only a few games. The uses of diplomat units, however, is primarily for their military value. Gathering intelligence and conducting campaigns of bribery, treachery and sabotage are the primary mission of diplomats.

Even trade has overt military implica-

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« Circle Reader Service #35 »

tions. While it might seem the most peaceful thing in the world to establish a trade route to a foreign city, the increase is trade only gives the player *establishing* the trade route an advantage. Computer players never seem to establish them with the human player, but apparently do so with ease among themselves. Caravans are also used to rush the production of those long-term investments known as wonders of the world, which can quickly free up a city for more important (and often militarily useful) items.

It's a difficult concept to grasp, but many a city in a republic has had to build things as "peaceful" as a cathedral or coliseum so that its armies could march off to war. This is because the populace of the city had to be "appeased" so that the armies could deploy beyond the city gates without throwing the whole town into unrest. It seems that virtually *everything* in *Civilization* translates into a military advantage. While quite historical, the overt implications of this aspect of the game may be a turn-off to some.

The clash of military units, by comparison to the aggressive struggle for economic and diplomatic superiority, is almost anticlimactic. While one must sweat over building up individual cities and discoveries, armies bump into each other with the ultimate in instantaneous finality. Combat is resolved by the old "ping pong balls in the fishbowl" technique. A unit with an attack strength of four puts four ping pong balls in the fishbowl, while a unit with a defense strength of three would put three in the bowl. The computer mixes up the seven ping pong balls, then pulls one out to determine the winner and eliminates the loser. Terrain, fortifications and a unit's "veteran" status will all effect its strength, and as technology progresses, so do unit strengths and abilities.

Political Correctness

Civilization also strives to be a "hip" game and deals with popular social issues from the standpoint of "political correctness." Thus, global warming is a tremendous threat (one that is all too often realized in the beta version). Odd, for such a recent, unproven theory.... Evolution is expressed in the game's introduction, but at least *that* debate has been around a while. Pollution, therefore, becomes a society's primary focus after industrialization takes place, with players being channeled toward more politically correct power plants, recycling centers and mass transit to address the problem. Even the beta test "super highway" wonder of the world gave way to "women's suffrage." While women's suffrage is a novel concept for its effect during game play, it is also another brick in the wall of political correctness.

"... And the Omega."

Ultimately, most *Civilization* games end in the "space race." Assuming that one hasn't managed to conquer the world (which, according to the victory point schedule in the beta version, is the optimal ending), one must discover the plastics, robotics and superconductors necessary after building the Apollo program, and build what this writer calls "the space ark." A scant section of the documentation covers this penultimate endeavor, but it will require much time, usually, before things are perfected. Time during which players are often lunging at each other's capitals (where their palaces



are located), since that is the only way to sabotage the opponent's space program. The wars can get particularly nasty toward the end-game for this reason and with nukes flying, global warming setting in repeatedly and SDI defenses popping up like weeds, the end-game is almost a game unto itself.

One disappointing element is the continuance of technological evolution. There is none. The technology of the games ends at circa 2000 AD tech levels, and then players research generic "futuristic technology" (a.k.a. "the meaning of life") for some bonus victory points. This writer would like to have seen the extra effort made for nanotech items and science-fictionesque units to play with while the space ark is spending some 60 years (turns) on its way to Alpha Centauri. Of course, one wouldn't get to play with them for very long before the game ends, but hovercraft and space shuttles should have been made available despite their limited time of usefulness in the game.

"The Value of a Good Thing Is To Have Done It."

All its diverse elements make *Civilization* an extremely rich and rewarding game to play. Surely the design and development teams must have agonized over all that had to be left *out* in order to make the game playable. Everything from the stirrup to super highways is not included in the final package, and this writer can only speculate as to the effect of their loss. One loss that *everyone* will suffer from, however, is the absence of a tutorial. Without a real "hands on; do this, do that" introduction to the game, new players will often find themselves in the same kind of quagmire people did 6000 years ago. ("Sure, Ogg, pottery sounds like a great idea, but what will it *do* for us?") The beefy 120+ page manual is going to have to be fairly well studied before one dives into the salient points of civilization building, and more is the pity for players will not discover (game) literacy until about 1000 BC or so.

When the dust settles and one is left to excavate the history of his civilization at the game's end, it all boils down to a point total. Of paramount importance is the size of one's population and how happy they are. This is followed by the mega-points awarded for building wonders of the world. Turns of complete world peace and the generic "futuristic discoveries" pay some bonus points, but great negatives are assessed for any pollution within the empire (as per the game's "politically correct" bias). Still, in terms of victory points, there is no substitute for global hegemony through world conquest. As in *Railroad Tycoon*, a hall of fame lists the top five games played.

The Histories

When the second issue of *Computer Gaming World* was published, the cover was a picture which satirized the apes at the obelisk from *2001: A Space Odyssey*. On that cover, the apes discover a computer disk as their obelisk, and so progressed forward. That's the image to keep in mind when thinking about *Civilization*. Sure to succeed beyond even *Railroad Tycoon*, a new Olympian in the genre of god games has truly emerged and *Sid Meier's Civilization* is likely to prove itself the greatest discovery in computer entertainment since, well... the wheel! **CGW**

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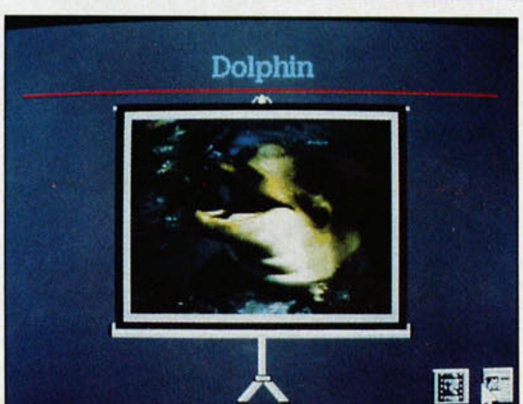
Sony's "Laser Library"

by Jasper Sylvester









One of the toughest decisions a computer user is likely to face is whether or not to upgrade his existing hardware. The decision is particularly acute for those who are considering whether to upgrade to a CD-ROM drive or not. There are several factors which complicate that decision. One factor is that the consumer may pay so much money for the hardware itself that no funds remain for purchasing new software. Another factor is trying to decide whether the new hardware will be compatible with future releases.

Sony Corporation has taken a major step in reducing anxiety over the former and helped some with the latter. By releasing the *Sony Laser Library System* at a suggested retail price of $699, the electronics/entertainment giant has provided computer gamers with an external CD-ROM (but not CD-ROM-XA or CD-I) compatible drive and approximately $2,000 worth of software.

The software bundled into the *Sony Laser Library System* includes the *Compton's Family Encyclopedia* (from **Britannica Software**); the **Microsoft Bookshelf** (complete with the *American Heritage Dictionary*, *Concise Columbia Encyclopedia* and *World Almanac and Book of Facts (1991)*, as well as *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, *Roget's II: The New Thesaurus* and the *Concise Columbia Dictionary of Quotations*); the multimedia *Languages of the World* database (an on-line database of Chinese, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Spanish and Swedish); the **National Geographic Society**'s *Mammals: A Multimedia Encyclopedia* (an interactive reference work); **Software Toolworks**' *World Atlas: CD-ROM Version* (featuring almost 250 VGA color maps) and **Sierra**'s *Mixed-Up Mother Goose: CD-ROM*.

Not only does this line-up reflect a tremendous assortment of useful programs, but the fact that so many "off the shelf" CD-ROM programs work with the drive gives potential purchasers the assurance that it is compatible with *most* currently available programs. The drive requires at least 512K RAM, a hard disk and DOS 3.1 or above. It is highly recommended that purchasers have a VGA monitor/adapter and mouse, since most of the CD-ROM products to be used with the drive will be supporting those standards. It is not, of course, compatible with CD-I, CDTV or CD-ROM-XA. So, one is not certain what the future will hold. As it is, however, the drive will support the **Sierra** CD-ROM games (*Mixed-Up Mother Goose*, *Jones in the Fast Lane*, *Space Quest IV* and *Stellar 7*), **Software Toolworks**' CD-ROM game pack (a collection of previously published games, *Chessmaster 2000*, *Gin King-Cribbage King* and *Beyond the Black Hole*) and **Access**' CD collection (*Crime Wave*, *Mean Streets*, *World Class Leaderboard* and *Echelon*), as well as **Interplay**'s *Battlechess CD-ROM*.

The *Sony Laser Library System* seems to be a logical way for the computer gamer who wants to get right into multimedia *now* to do so. Even if the standards for optical-based computer games were to change in the future, the gamer would have plenty of useful software on hand to use for reference and enjoyment. The future is not clear, but the amount of CD-ROM products already available makes it tempting to get involved now. **CGW**

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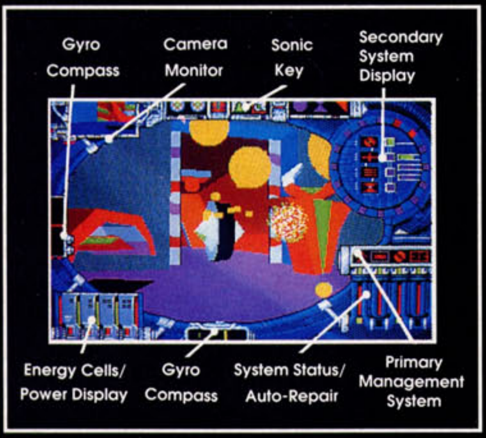
CYBERCON III

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Screen shot from PC version.

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

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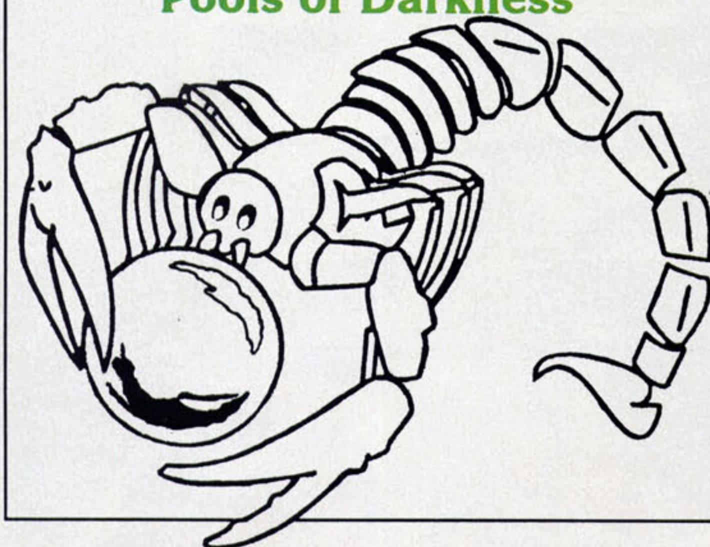
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Scorpion's View

Scorpia Scries SSI's Pools of Darkness





Scorpia is an experienced and respected adventure game expert. CGW *is pleased to be able to provide this forum for her distinctive and often controversial perspective.*

Peering into the crystal ball, I see a flood...a flood of games. The world is awash in new releases! As the tides recede, however, there is left only small, dark pools. Before we jump into the pool, however, an important bug alert. If you are bringing characters over from *Secret of the Silver Blades*, make sure none of them are wearing Cloaks of Displacement. Boot up *Silver Blades* and check the inventories. Drop any cloaks right then and there, *before* you do the transfer.

For reasons as yet unknown, these cloaks cause severe problems in *Pool of Darkness*, most notably locking up the game. This can happen any time, in particular when you try to unequip the cloak. Even a cloak that has been behaving itself can suddenly turn bad, as happened to me more than once. So to be on the safe side, dump the cloaks before you bring your team over.

As most people know by now, *Pools of Darkness* is the conclusion of the series that began with *Pool of Radiance*. This is a game designed for high-level characters (expect your team to be at or near 40th level by the time you're done), with many tough encounters. Therefore, if you have a party that completed *Silver Blades*, it's a good idea to bring them over.

Xenophobic Journey

You should also consider dropping any non-humans from your party (if you still have any) except for thieves (thieves, however, aren't very useful in this game, so you may want to consider dropping them anyway). Only humans or thieves of any race can advance as high as required by *POD*. I quickly found that my two Elven Fighter/Magic Users were just not good enough for this one, and replaced them with humans. Your fighters need those two shots per turn, and most importantly, *everyone* needs a lot of hit points.

Look at it this way: if you create a brand new human fighter, he *starts* the game at 14th level, and he *comes equipped* with plate mail+3, a shield+3, longbow +2, etc. Since **SSI** never hands out goodies for nothing (well, at least not in their games), this should give you some idea of what you'll be up against. This really is a game for both experienced characters and experienced players. I don't recommend *Pools of Darkness* to the novice gold box gamer. It would be much better to play some of the others first, rather than trying to start with this one.

It all begins quietly enough with your arrival in Phlan, ten years after you originally cleaned up the city in *POR*. Phlan is prosperous now and, these days, a dull place for adventurers. Everyone tells you that and seems anxious to get you moving to more exciting places.

There is very little you'll need to purchase in the shops, since your party either has many magical items brought over from *Pool* (yes, even belts of Giant Strength and the +5 silver swords make it across), or the ones they come with if newly created for the game. The one thing you should get for your characters is a mirror (anyone with a silver shield, however, won't need one). With Medusae and basilisks around, mirrors are good to have.

When you're finished roaming the town, the game proper begins with your party escorting Sasha (remember her from *Silver Blades*?) to check out some trouble in another part of the land. You don't get much further than past the town gates, however, before trouble strikes a lot closer to home.

Bane (the great god of evil) takes over. A cloud of darkness covers the countryside, all the good towns and cities vanish, and only strongholds of evil are left. Just when you're wondering what to do, Elminster pulls you into his secret hideout in limbo, gives you some explanations, then dumps you back into the world. The long trek has begun.

It definitely is a long one; there is much to do here and this is probably the most extensive game in the entire series, bigger even than *Pool of Radiance*. Don't expect to get through this one in only a couple of days.

What you can expect are many hard fights along the way. You'll come up against a lot of spellcasters, especially when you're down among the Drow. *Every* Drow you come across is a spellcaster, either a cleric or mage type. As Drow are very resistant to magic, these encounters can be deadly if you're not careful. I found Delayed Blast Fireball to be a good spell to use against them; they seemed less resistant to that one, and it did a good job of taking them out, or at least doing some damage.

Do the Limbo Hop

The pools of darkness are in four areas. These pools are actually portals that connect the prime material plane with limbo and, consequently, limbo with other planes of existence. Each time you enter a pool, you arrive at Elminster's camp in limbo. Here you can rest up, be healed, be trained and/or go on to a different plane.

Travelling to the different planes is one of the big sore points. *You can't take most of your magical items with you.* They have to be put in storage or they'll be destroyed as you cross from limbo to the other plane. Only mundane (non-magical) items or special-purpose rings (cold resistance, wizardry, blinking, etc) will survive the passage. Rings of protection will *not* go through.

So all your really neat things have to be left behind when you go on to the tougher parts of the game (and those other planes are tough!). Now, on the other side (so to speak), there *are* weapons and armor, as well as other equipment to pick up as you fight your way through the hordes. Much of this isn't nearly as good as what was left behind, although certainly better than nothing.

The trick is, *this* stuff won't make the trip back. When you're done with that plane and return to Elminster's camp, all the items you found (again, except for special-purpose rings and mundane items) disappear.

We therefore have the nonsensical situation of leaving your equipment behind, finding replacements, and then having the replacements vanish when you return. What's the point, except to add artificial difficulty to a game that certainly doesn't need it?

The main reason for accumulating all these good things in the first place is to have them for the major encounters. When you go up against a Kalistes or a Dragon King, you need your best high-powered weapons and armor, as well as spells. Most of these critters are too potent to be taken out in one or two shots, and they do some heavy damage of their own.

Yet it is in these very situations that you don't have your best items with you; you only have what you've been able to find along the way. Checking out every room and passage for equipment lends itself to extra fighting you would probably want to avoid. This is particularly true since there are many times and places where the party cannot rest and heal up; these options (Fix and Rest) do *not* appear on the camp menu (you can still camp out to save the game and do other operations).

Fortunately, there are only four times in the game where you have to endure this idiocy. Unfortunately, they are the toughest four places. This includes the big showdown at the end, where you have to go through three *hard* fights in a row, with no saving in between.

At the end, you get all your original stuff back, and much good it does you then, unless you plan on going through Dave's Challenge, an area that opens only after the major quest is finished. The Challenge is a killer dungeon of the nastiest type; going through it is not required.

Speaking of the end, this is the other sore point. Ordinarily, I would not reveal what happens, but the conclusion is so poorly conceived that I have to say something about it.

DOS About All

You started your party out in *Pool of Radiance* as fledgling heroes. They went on through *Curse of the Azure Bonds* and *Secret of the Silver Blades*, becoming more experienced and powerful. Now, they've just finished a task whose proportions are almost immeasurable, turning back, virtually single-handed, powers of darkness and defeating what is nothing less than a demi-god.

What's the reward? Nothing. That's right, nothing. After Gothmenes is defeated, the forces of good (presumably the good gods) step in and "turn back the clock", so things are as they were



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when you first entered Phlan. No one, except you, Elminster, and the gods, remembers anything of what happened.

So, the last hurrah for your hardy band turns out to be less than a whisper. No cheering crowds, no banquets, no speeches, not even a thank you (except from Elminster). After all they've been through, there is nothing for your party to do except slip out quietly by ship, either for retirement or Dave's Challenge.

What a downer! **SSI** was supposed to have learned something about reward endings after their horrible *Eye Of The Beholder* "drop to DOS" ending. That certainly isn't evident here. The *POR* series is over, the characters have advanced to where they can only retire, and they get a slap in the face like this.

What is so sad about that (and the "store items before crossing planes" silliness), is that *Pools of Darkness* is otherwise the best in the gold box line to date.



The game *is* challenging, and some of it is really amazing.

This is especially so with the Moander segment (Moander is the big green guy you see on the back of the box).

Walking around, on, and inside this immense sleeping god is really bizarre, with more "other-worldly" feel to it than any of the other areas. Going through the heart section in particular is an interesting experience, since Moander is still alive and his heart is beating.

The land of Kalistes (a sort of spider goddess) is about the same size as the Realms (prime material plane where Phlan used to be), with much to do and find.

The cave of the dragon king is small, but filled with all varieties of nasty dragons. (Be prepared for a welcoming committee when you pass through the pool to this place.) Dark Phlan (rescue Sasha again) is a twisted version of the original, and leads to the final encounters in the palace of Gothmenes.

The lands of the Drow will certainly keep you on your toes, and you'll want to keep an eye out (hehe) for the Beholders in Mulmaster. In the Tower of Marcus, beware of the gaze creature (hint: he can't hurt what he can't see).

And there are, of course, the usual little side quests that are a hallmark of the gold box games: the cave of the Silver Blades (Vala makes a return appearance), the temple of Tyr, the ruins of Myth Drannor (yes, the Rakshasa are back, bigger and meaner than ever), Taydome Keep (rescue Sasha) and various small keeps and such where you can do some good deeds by clearing out the monsters.

The graphics are good, better than in previous games, at least with VGA. The full-screen shots are finely detailed, and some are spectacular. As for the sound, well, I turned that off early on. Every time the party took a step, there was a loud "clunk" that quickly became annoying. The control-S command did not work, so I had to re-boot and re-do the configuration for no sound.

"Look up the word" now is done only from the front portion of the manual; you no longer have to search for words among the paragraphs (hurray!).

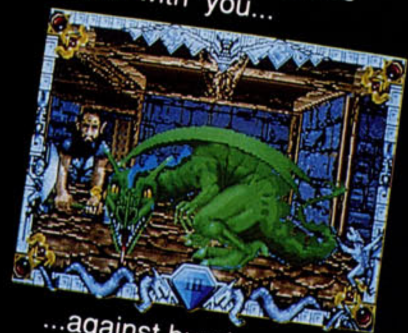
Overall, except for the two points mentioned earlier, I enjoyed the game. Without the lame ending and item storage requirements, this would have been the perfect finale to the *POR* series. Regardless, if you can live with the flaws, you should have a good time with this one.

That's it for this look into the crystal. Until next time, happy adventuring! CGW





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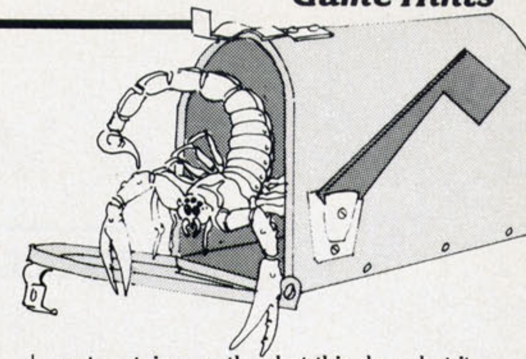
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Circle Reader Service #41



Scorpion's Mail

Well, here we are on the brink of the usual pre-Christmas game release extravaganza. Good thing Fred and I did some cleaning earlier this year; I have the feeling we'll be needing the room pretty soon now. One of these days, we're gonna have to enlarge this back room. (Either that, or I give up my packrat habits and clean out even *more* old letters.... Guess we'll have to make the room bigger, after all!)

Since the new games are just starting to appear as I write this, the current mailbag is pretty much devoted to the older ones, with the exception of the bug alert for *Might & Magic III* (noted below).

Before we get to the hints, however, once again, the reminder that people who live in the United States must enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope when they write to me for hints. Just last week, I received two letters on the same day which did not include SASEs. Please remember to include that SASE; otherwise, you won't get a reply. (This does not apply to readers in countries outside the U.S.)

Might & Magic III: This one is *very* new, and no questions have shown up yet, but there are some problems with it that have surfaced even in short-term playing. If you come across either or both of these, you may wish to send your disks back to **New World** for replacement. (They are aware of the problems and working to correct them.) Problem #1 is with the Greek brothers, Alpha, Beta, etc. A quest in the game requires talking to all of them, but the program will not recognize the fact that you've seen the one in the town of Wildabar. This is relatively minor.

The more important one by far occurs in the Dark Knight dungeon (the one with the red shield on the door). The instructions on the statue of Ivory Billow may be *wrong*. The correct instructions for figuring out the answer are: "Count the secret number with Fire Hood and Desert Breeze, but deduct Forest Green, Frost Wing and Phantom Sorrow. Multiply by Shadow Grave." That will do it for you. Oh, and don't forget the secret number; it's practically right there in front of you.

Countdown: People are having some trouble getting out of the wine cellar. Gee, with all that good liquor down there, why would they want to? (heh) For those who *do* want to leave, I recommend moving things around. You never know what might be uncovered (like hints for operating the secret door to freedom, for instance). Left to right, top to bottom.

Spellcasting 101: It's sort of amazing (ahem) how many are having difficulty with the Maize Room. Wasn't so long ago I gave a hint about that here, and now I'm doing it again. Maybe its very simplicity is the problem. Really, this is easier than it looks. Just map out the rooms carefully. There are no tricks here; the rooms are laid out in a very straightforward manner. When you're done, look at the letters. Those letters are important. That's all I'm going to say—there's no need for me to spell the whole thing out for you.

Martian Dreams: There is only so far you can go in this game, and then you have to rescue all the humans trapped in the Dream World. Until you do that, there is no way to melt the ice caps (among other things). Using the machine in Hellas is no big deal, but the one in Elysium is another matter. You need to talk to all the Martians in the Hellas dream world first. After you have a Martian of your own (so to speak), go back and talk to them again.

Eye of the Beholder: Continuing the series of hints for the special bonuses, here's an outright answer: the final bonus (level 12) requires spiking Mr. Eyes in his own trap. Not an easy thing to do, and you must have the wand of Silvias (and quick footwork) to pull this one off. For the bonus on level 8, look for a room with many inactive flame gauntlet holes on the walls. What to do there, however, is something I'll let you figure out (hehe).

Bane of the Cosmic Forge: Still popular, judging from all the questions that keep arriving in my box. One difficult point is dealing with Bane and Rebecca in the fight at the end (one ending, anyway). Only stakes and holy water are going to work here. Also, if you have the silver cross, this needs to be used in the first round of combat. (I am not certain exactly what this does, but it seems to help.) Finally, keep in mind that stakes are like daggers, so a good skill with daggers is helpful. (However, I hear this may have been changed in other versions, and you may need a different skill to use the stakes effectively.)

King's Quest V: Those who are having trouble getting out of the tavern cellar are advised not to step into the tavern (grin). At least, not until you've been through the desert, the forest and the elves' place, and you've done a kind deed for a certain small critter. Otherwise, it's pretty much curtains for poor Graham.

Quest For Glory II: When dealing with the fire elemental, you only need one pouch of incense. If you have more than that, you may experience problems in catching the elemental. One pouch, properly used, is all you require. Of course, you also have to have something to trap it in, and a little something to chase the elemental into the item. Both of those are fairly obvious, if you consider the nature of the elemental, and have had a chat with Aziza.

Timequest: Some folks are having a hard time with the Churchill broadcast. They can't figure out how to stop Hitler from hearing Churchill's retraction. Well, you certainly aren't going to accomplish much by sticking around in Dover. Remember that different places also have different times. (There's more to this time travel business than meets the eye sometimes.)

Well, that's it for this look into the mailbag. Remember if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: Visit the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu).

On GEnie: Stop by the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT).

By U.S. mail (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the U.S.):

Scorpia, PO Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring! **CGW**

In a Word, "Yes!"

Spectrum HoloByte's Wordtris

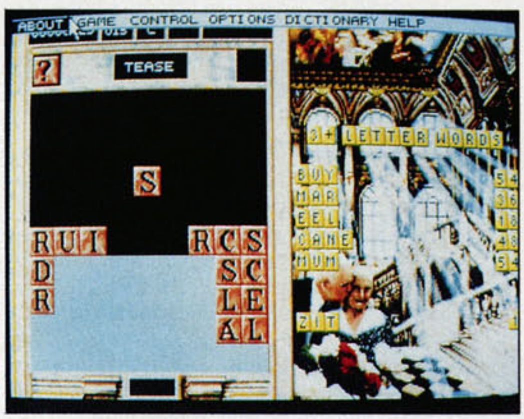
by Michael S. Lasky

Glasnost, comrades, helped make *Tetris* the first Soviet computer game to become a major success in the U.S.—indeed, worldwide. With sales of legitimate copies now in excess of 280,000, according to U.S. publisher **Spectrum HoloByte**, *Tetris* holds the unfortunate record of being the most pirated computer game in the world.

Like all modern entertainment successes, *Tetris* has not only spawned sequels, but its massive and unequalled popularity certainly produced myriad copycat—licensed and unlicensed—clones. It also has three spinoffs of its own. Directly on the hot success of *Tetris* was *Welltris*, a 3D-well version that was fun, but too difficult for people who were still trying to win at the first version. The second offspring, *Faces*, was released in 1990 and named arcade computer game of the year by the **Software Publishers Association**. Now comes the latest sequel—and the cleverest: *Wordtris*.

For the (possibly) 17 gameplayers in the world who don't know how a *Tetris* game works, here it is in a text byte: Various sets of rectangles fall from the top of a computer screen to land on the bottom. The player attempts to align a row of these cubes across without an interruption. When a line is formed, it disappears and the player gets points. Sounds easy, right? The catch is that not all the shapes fit so easily and the player must manipulate them so that they do. As points mount, the speed of the falling shapes increases, requiring great dexterity and sharp spatial reasoning.





TITLE:	Wordtris
SYSTEM:	IBM, Macintosh
# PLAYERS:	1 (or 2 with modem)
PRICE:	$44.95
DESIGNER:	Sergei L. Utkin and Vjacheslav A. Tsoy
PUBLISHER:	Spectrum HoloByte Alameda, CA

Wordtris does this concept one better. Instead of geometric shapes falling, letters fall and the player is required, in the *Scrabble* tradition, to create words across *and* down. The letters fall to about center level—the base line. Below is a pool into which letters sink as other letters fall on top of previously dropped ones.

So now, as if the spatial reasoning and quick reflexes that *Tetris* demanded weren't enough to keep a gamer busy, one must be able to spell. With the 60,000-word dictionary that comes built in, as well as the player dictionary editor, words of three letters or more are instantly recognized when they get to the base line or below. So players must be very careful how they arrange larger words that include three-letter words.

Wordtris, like its predecessors, is as infuriating as it is incredibly addictive and, like its forebears, is popular with players for its utter simplicity of design and play. There are no space aliens to shoot down and no monsters chasing the cursor around the screen, ready to slay or flay the hero. No secret mazes. No violence. It is simply the player's abilities with cursor keys and making split-second decisions against the clock. Indeed, it is that speed that makes the *Tetris* games so exhilarating.

What takes this game beyond the ordinary are the variations and user customization capabilities it comes with. Gamers can use the keyboard, a mouse, or a joystick to move the letter cubes about the screen. They also handle the preference pointer on the opening and drop-down menus used for customizing the game to a player's desire.

While the mouse is handy for pointing the cursor/arrow in the menus, it performs a bit too loosely in the actual game. Stick to the keyboard for more exacting control.

Players are able to select a game mode for individual against the computer; competitive (with two players using the keyboard at the same time), cooperative (again with two players, but this time each helping the other) and tournament (up to four players, taking turns at the same keyboard). There is also head-to-head *Wordtris* in which two players, each on a different computer, play simultaneously for the best score (requiring two copies of the program and modems on both computers).

Other customizing controls include setting time limits, limiting the use of repeat words and selecting difficulty levels. There are enough options to keep the game from ever getting stale with repeated replays. The variations are limitless.

Like *Scrabble* or any crossword puzzle, as the letters land they form the words that the players create—and then some. Inadvertently created words will appear in the well beneath the user-controlled base line and count just the same. In fact, when the end of the game looks near, words form and often give the gamer new life and more points as well.

Another twist is the magic word. Depending on the difficulty level chosen, a word of five to seven letters will be shown at the top of the screen. If the word juggler can form it, all letters on the screen are erased, and the point value of each letter—whether in a word or not—are earned.

Tetris was a classic game. *Wordtris* does it one better. Does that make it a better classic? In a word, *Yes!* **CGW**


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Over There

ProFlight *to the Stars*

by Paul Rigby



Crime Time



Seigemaster

One of the most surprising pieces of software to appear in the UK over the past year has been *ProFlight*, a Panavia Tornado flight simulator from **HiSoft** (a company that obviously considers the design of their laBeLs vEry cAreFulLy). The release is "surprising" because HiSoft is known more for their 16-bit languages (C, BASIC, assembler, etc.) on the Amiga and ST platforms.

With *ProFlight*, HiSoft has attempted to provide the simulation enthusiast with a flight simulator that approaches the military realm in a similar fashion that **Microsoft/BAO** approach the civil arena in *Flight Simulator*.

Arriving in a sturdy box and a professionally ring-bound 174-page manual, *ProFlight* contains a mass of features including—deep breath: drag due to landing gear, air brakes, elevators, tailerons and rudder; varying wind and turbulence; multiple-view options; correct effect of tailerons, elevators and the like at *all* angles; full aerobatic capability; auto rudder, wing sweep plus bank and pitch limiters; wing lift for sweep and flaps; induced and profile drag from wing sweepback and flaps; deflection and radar-elevated gun sights; navigation aids, waypoints, distance measuring equipment, heading and bearing; four-function autopilot and three-function throttle; accurate star map for 1 January at latitude 51.5 degrees North; yawing moments for rudder demand and slip, etc.

There are reports that scenery disks will be available later. *ProFlight* is currently available for the Amiga 500 and 3000 and ST (color low-res or monochrome hi-res) or even the Atari TT. Although one can buy *ProFlight* from the addresses at the end of the column, interested persons may wish to give **HiSoft** themselves a ring at 01144 525 718181.

The German software publisher **Starbyte** is unleashing a hatfull of games onto an unsuspecting public—available on Amiga, PC and C64, with ST soon. The first of the four to be released is *Spirit of Adventure*.

The plot is fairly interesting. The world of Lamarge once was in the gods' favor. The gods protected the country and its inhabitants from all dangers, but time passed and the gods turned away from the people of Lamarge. Don't ask why (I just got here). The land was devastated and Melfur, the mountain of sacrifice, exploded into many different fragments. Only a few were aware of the magic power of the rocks, later known as runes.

Eventually, those who managed to collect three runes were allowed to enter temples and share in the power. Once it became known that this was possible, both the forces of good and evil began to attempt to own and control the runes. Over the centuries, the runes became a religion. This resulted in the runes' custodians, the priests, turning into an important political power.

Meanwhile, at the same time, the Brotherhood of Dreamers was founded. Many people become addicted to the drug Opitar and only the Brotherhood knew its composition. Thus, the decay of the reich had started. (One would never guess this game was from Germany.)

The task? (Trumpets, please)... Take over a group of up to six characters, find the origin of the drug and destroy the brotherhood.

Spirit of Adventure includes dozens of monsters, eight different classes of characters, 3-D views of cities and dungeons, more then 100 spells and the magic of the runes.

In *Crime Time*, the player wakes up in a dirty little hotel room and doesn't quite remember how he or she got there. (What's new, eh?) The player is sure, though, that he or she must have been drinking quite a bit (again, what's new?) but just can't recall any details.

Last night there was a murder and the protagonist is supposed to pay for it. The player's on-screen character is not guilty, though. Yet, the player must prove his innocence. Now if only more time was available....

Crime Time is a text/graphic adventure with a graphics window displayed on the upper area of the screen and a movement rosette at the bottom left. To the lower right corner will be found a list of suggested actions, verbs and so on.

In *Return of Medusa*, one can't keep a bad woman down. She's sleek, she's foxy, but the bad thing is—she's *baaaaack*. That's a real downer. With improved graphics that include 3-D dungeons and other features such as share speculation and gambling, the *Return of Medusa* is set 300 years later—in exactly the same place. The evil returns into a time where crime, drugs and violence dominate everyday life... into a time without hope.

Meanwhile—"...and they will spread out and sow the seeds of damnation in ever-growing circles. Unless somebody recognizes the danger and begins to act, there will come countless nights with a moon wrapped in clouds and a wind moaning its death chant..."

In *Lords of Doom*, the player takes control of two characters, Sharon and Charlie, and leads them in their crucial fight against time and evil. The task is to solve a plethora of puzzles whilst trying to find the Lords of Doom in order to put an end to this dreadful nightmare. An adventure that will keep one in suspenders, there's no doubt about it.

From **Vulture Publishing** in the UK comes *Seigemaster*. The player is asked by the spirit of his wizard father to bring greatness back to the downtrodden people. The wizard will lead the player through 100 tasks culminating in the defeat of yet another UBG (*Ultimate Bad Guy*). On the way, the player will learn the art of seigecraft and how to live off the land. An RPG taking an isometric viewpoint, the player can lead a party of up to ten characters and there are over ten (eleven?) castles to lay under siege. Available now on the Amiga and ST for £25.99.

Anyone who would like to contact me can do so on **CompuServe** (75300,1503) or by mail to 20 Malvern Road, Liverpool, England, L6 6BW. (*Please* include two international reply coupons if you would like a reply.)

Note: The above games, and any of the other games mentioned in "Over There" in past issues, can be obtained from:

Computer Adventure World, 318 Kensington, Liverpool, England, L7 0EY. Telephone: 01144-51-263-6306.

Miles Better Software, 219/221 Cannock Road, Chadsmoor, Cannock, Staffordshire, England, WS11 2DD. Telephone: 01144-543-466-577/8/80, Fax: 01144-543-466-579.

Premier Mail Order, Trybridge Ltd., 8 Buckwins Square, Burnt Mills, Basildon, Essex, England, SS13 1BJ. Telephone: 01144-268-590-766, Fax: 01144-268-590-076.

All of the above telephone numbers assume you can dial direct. If you have any trouble contact the international operator. **CGW**

Chronological Kleptomania

Broderbund's Where in America's Past is Carmen Sandiego?

By David M. Wilson



TITLE:	Where in America's Past is Carmen Sandiego?
SYSTEM:	IBM
COPY PROTECT:	Document Look-Up
PRICE:	$59.95
DESIGNERS:	Claire Curtin, David Ross, Leila Joslyn, Tom Rettig, and Ann Kronen.
PUBLISHER:	Broderbund San Rafael, California



It could be "High Noon" or "Custer's Last Stand" for Carmen Sandiego. In fact, the matron of mischief may try to steal the golden spike from the transcontinental railroad or the Constitution itself, since the latest capers for **Broderbund**'s cultural kleptomaniacs occur throughout the time continuum of American history. Where detective players once spanned the globe to foil her V.I.L.E. (Villains' International League of Evil) "five-finger discounts" of national treasures, they started to traverse the timescapes of world history in order to pull off their chronological crimes in *Where In Time Is Carmen Sandiego?*. Now, player gumshoes must foil her historical heists by chasing her across the space and time of the United States of America.

Historical Roots

Broderbund's *Where in America's Past is Carmen Sandiego?* is their latest offering in this quality educational series (a series of computer games which, in turn, has spawned its own television series). As in previous "Carmen" waves, the student...er...player signs on with the ACME detective agency and receives a case assignment which starts said player PI on his/her investigation. In the course of the investigation, players will attempt to track down V.I.L.E. henchmen with such humorous names as: Casey Rah Sirah, Leif Malone, Phil R. Yup, Della Kitessen, and Rhoda Lottamiles. The goal in this historical scavenger hunt is to offer players an appreciation of America's colorful past, geography, and culture.

Activating the Chronoskimmer (i.e. time machine), previously used in *Where In Time Is Carmen Sandiego?*, players do the "Quantum Leap"-frog and follow the clues. Thus, players are able to gather clues and guess the next place and time to search. As the player gathers clues, they input them into the game's now-standard crime computer so that it can analyze the clues and, eventually, create an arrest warrant.

The challenge of the game, as it is in all *Carmen Sandiego* products (whether they are purchased as a stand-alone game or played on the **Prodigy Interactive Service**), is to follow the line of evidence until one has sufficient clues for the "crime computer" to issue that arrest warrant. The player loses the game if he or she is unable to follow that line of evidence and earn that warrant. Indeed, if the player even happens to discover the location of Carmen's henchman (or henchwoman) *before* getting a warrant, the villain will leave a nasty note reminding the player that a warrant is necessary and the player automatically loses the case he is working on.

Printing Press

This time, the game's documentation is craftily designed to


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resemble an old western newspaper. The clearly written instructions are a refreshing change from many quickly written and garbled game manuals. Along with the "newspaper," there are also cards which depict and describe each V.I.L.E. henchman/henchwoman in Carmen's gang. Each card has a tin-type-style photograph of the baddie along with a witty description of the individual villain.

The information on the cards is not only well presented, but it also assists players when it is time to issue a warrant.

As a teacher, one can appreciate the fact that the game offers enough of a leisurely pace that players/students have time to utilize the reference book included in the game box, *What happened When, A Chronology of Life and Events in America* by Gorton Carruth. This thick (over 1400 pages) paperback is essential for gameplay, as well as being a handy reference book for any would-be historian's library. Naturally, one of the purposes of the game's design is for players to learn salient facts, pertinent dates and some U.S. geography, but the design also provides excellent opportunities for them to learn how to use an index or quickly peruse an atlas. In our learning center, we find it exciting to see students not only play the game, but use their free time to read up on some of the events they have encountered in the course of the game. Encouraging research is certainly one of the game's strongest attributes.

Judgment of History

The program is more than educational, however; it is also highly entertaining. Delightful artwork decorates the game, as do cleverly animated segments that demonstrate to detectives whether the correct course of action is being followed or not. The humor keeps the educational aspects of the game from bogging down too quickly in pacing or overtly pounding the student/player over the head with its lessons.

Alas, after a time, any Carmen game becomes disconcertingly similar to adults and older players. One garners the impression that *Where in America's Past is Carmen Sandiego?* probably doesn't have enough specific knowledge to assist high schoolers, for example, in passing history exams. In fact, the game design seems, instead, to focus on a rudimentary understanding of the *chronology* of American history, such that an adult with a fairly basic knowledge of history can sit down and play the game with only a rare glance at the accompanying reference book.

A helpful option would have been to allow the player to set the game to remain in a particular time period in order to make a thorough study of that particular time period, rather than jumping all over America's past. This would assist the student who is studying a particular time period to gain a more detailed knowledge of a specific subject area.

All criticism aside, the game is excellent at what it was designed for. It stimulates an interest in and provides a conceptual framework for studying America's history. Indeed, students in our learning center not only "Quantum Leap"-frogged through the game, but they were stimulated enough to leap from the game's reference book to encyclopedias and other references. In this teacher's mind, *anything* that can motivate a student to perform independent research is great! CGW



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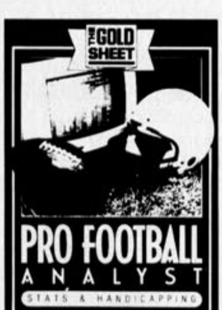
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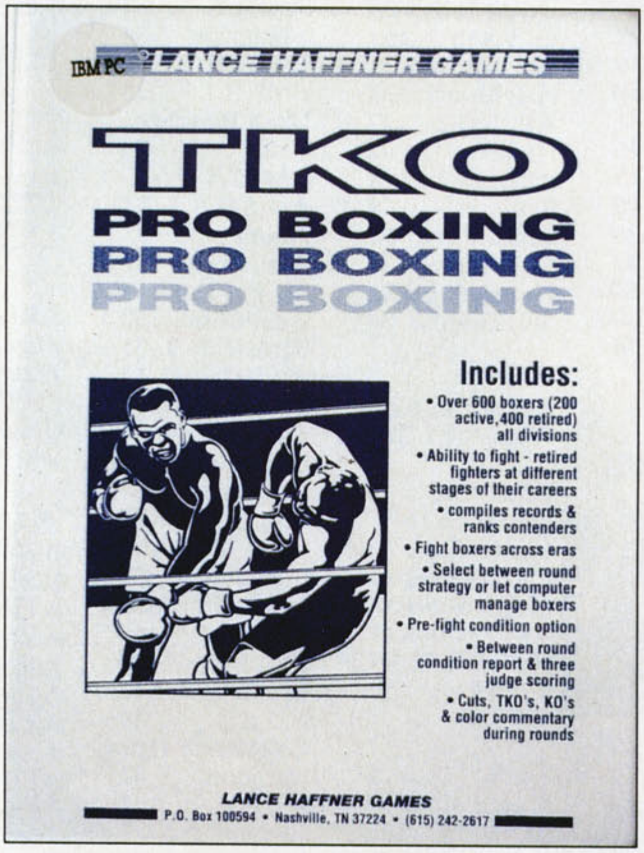
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Blow by Blow with TKO

Lance Haffner's TKO Pro Boxing

by Wallace Poulter

TITLE:	TKO Pro Boxing
SYSTEMS:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	0-2
PRICE:	$39.95
COPY PROTECT:	None
DESIGNERS:	Shannon Lynn with Jim & Thomas Trunzo
PUBLISHER:	Lance Haffner Games Nashville, TN



September 27, 1980
Wembley, England

Tonight, in one of the best fights in years, Alan Minter retained his Middleweight Championship with a unanimous decision over challenger Marvin Hagler. The fight started, as predicted, with Hagler using his power to establish dominance in the first two rounds. All three judges scored the second round 10-8 even without a knockdown. Minter, however, returned the favor in rounds three and four with effective counter-punching.

The give and take continued with Hagler grabbing rounds six and nine, while Minter won the seventh and eighth. The fifth round was scored evenly. The tenth round saw the beginning of the end for Hagler as Minter's constant body attack started to pay dividends. While occasional flurries came from the challenger, Minter was in full control, even while fighting off the ropes. A huge Minter eleventh set the stage for the round of the year.

Round 12 will be talked about for years to come. Minter started off briskly with a couple of stiff jabs and a combination. Circling to his left, Minter suddenly reversed direction and, as Hagler lunged in, scored with a huge right cross counter-punch. Impressively, Minter followed up with punch after unanswered punch. For nearly two minutes, Minter rained punches from every angle as he looked for the finishing touch. With 10 seconds to go, it looked all over and the referee prepared to step in. Suddenly, out of nowhere, Hagler connected with a single left hook and Minter went down! Minter barely beat the count and struggled to walk back to his corner. The crowd sat stunned at this turn of events. The judges didn't really know what to do either, all three scoring the round 10-8 for Minter despite the knockdown. Fortunately for Minter, his assault the previous round and the body punching earlier had weakened the challenger and Hagler was not able to take advantage in the understandably slow 13th. Minter took the 14th off, causing some concern but he finished strongly in the 15th to secure victory by the surprisingly wide margin of 145-138 (twice) and 144-138. Minter will defend early next year against fellow Englishman Tony Sibson, before a rematch against Hagler, probably in Las Vegas."

Marvin Hagler and Alan Minter did indeed meet for the World Middleweight Championship on September 27, 1980. Minter was coming off an impressive defeat of Vito Antuofurmo. Hagler was the number #1 contender and considered the best middleweight in the world. Hagler versus Minter promised to be a classic. However, Minter always had a tendency to cut and Hagler opened up a huge gash over Minter's eye, causing the fight to be stopped (the present writer cannot remember whether it was in the second or third round).

It has always been this reviewer's dream to see this great match to have been decided on the ability of the two rather than the cut. **Lance Haffner**'s *TKO Pro Boxing* offers that opportunity. Even better is that the exact true-life fight result (Minter stopped on cuts) also occurred during one of the replays initiated by this reviewer. *TKO Pro Boxing* is a fight fan's dream.

Tale of the Tape

The fiction which opened this article illustrates both the positive aspects and negative aspects of the game. On the positive side, the fight itself is presented via a text description. Somewhat similar to a radio commentary, the fighter's moves, punches, taunting, ring movement and injuries are all detailed. Yes, it is only text, but the game wonderfully presents the tension of a fight that many of us can recall from our youth as we hid our radios under the covers in order to listen to the latest fight.

On the negative side, note that one of the problems with *TKO*, and indeed, Jim (consultant on TKO) Trunzo's early board game *Title Bout*, is the very liberal scoring. Recently New York state has encouraged such liberal scoring. However, in other states and countries (particularly in the past), almost the only way to get a 10-8 round is, and was, to score a knockdown. In a fight decided by a knockout, this doesn't particularly matter, but in a close fight it can make all the difference. While in real life, the ten point must system is by far the better one, TKO will occasionally judge fights between Ali and Louis in which Ali will receive a 10-7 advantage in scoring *without* a knockdown. Hence, players will be forced to use the round-by-round scoring method in order to get more "realistic" decisions.

In addition, at least one judge regularly attends the same blind school that the Fenech-Nelson judges recently visited. Fortunately, the latest version (2.1) has corrected a number of previous bugs and errors while adding a nice feature or two. The worst problem in previous versions was the mistaken belief that a decision is rendered to a fighter when two of the judges cards score a draw. This should, of course, be a draw and not a decision for the fighter favored on the third card. Similarly, the occasional decision of the referee to stop a fight between rounds after the last round of the contest was rather an embarrassment. These have both been corrected.

As with all Lance Haffner game products, *TKO* is a stat-based text-only product. It contains over 600 active and retired fighters from sixteen of boxing's seventeen divisions. The potential match-ups are fascinating, from the obvious Ali versus Tyson to the much more provocative Sanchez versus Pep and Cerdan versus Hagler. The beauty of this game is the ability to match great fighters from different eras (Sanchez versus Pep) or to "promote" fights that should have been (Frazier versus Norton).

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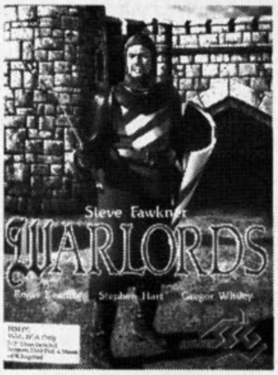
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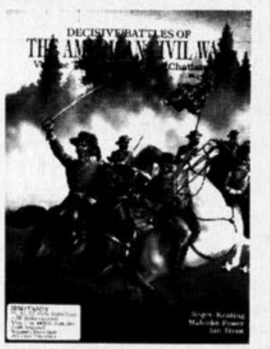
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STRATEGY

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MBT Kursk (SIM CAN)	39	39
Pacific Storm (SIM CAN)	39	39
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River Plate (GQ)	29	-
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Second Front (SSG)	39	39
Secret Weapons Luft.	39	-
Silent Service 2 (MICROPR)	34	-
Storm Across Europe (SSI)	39	-
Their Finest Hour/Battlehawks	39	19
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Armourgeddon (PSYGNOSIS)	-	34
Imperium (E.A.)	28	28
Overlord (VRGN)	33	33
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Rules of Engagement	39	39

HINT BOOKS

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Brigade Commander (TTR)	-	31
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F-15 II Desert Storm Disk	21	-
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Circle Reader Service #94

Because their careers are over, it is much easier to rank retired fighters and the resulting performances seem to be more satisfying than those involving current fighters. The problem with rating contemporary fighters is that the ratings tend to be much more subjective and open to question.

Though it may seem a trifle unreasonable to question why a fighter was left out of the database when over 600 fighters are included, one must wonder at the absence of the great Middleweight, Charley Burley. This absence is especially disappointing in light of the fact that he is not even available on the "Great Contenders" disk (available separately and consisting of even more fighters to match up).

Fortunately, the game allows players to add more fighters. One can simply study the values assigned to the 600+ fighters provided and, subjectively, rank an up-and-coming fighter proportionately. With any Haffner game, one does not expect a polished presentation. The value comes from the incredible amount of data that these games contain. Previous editions of the game came with the list of fighters on what looked like either a photocopy or a bad print-out. More annoyingly, the rankings of the fighters were incorrect, with the WBA and WBC headings switched. This has been changed in the new edition and the fighters are not given a governing body ranking. However, the problem of fighters' names being misspelled continues. For example, Chris Eubanks should be Chris Eubank and Dennis Andres should be Dennis Andries.

Are these small problems a purchase buster? Hardly! There are several nice features which improve *TKO Pro Boxing* over its tabletop counterparts. One such feature is the capacity for simultaneous punches. Others include: the ability to replay full careers in non-stop, no-strategy computer-versus-computer mode; the option of watching a match in a slower, spectator-oriented computer-versus-computer bout or, of course, the luxury of having a computer opponent when no human opponent is available. Another positive factor is the built-in statistics feature which allows players to save a fighter's performance to disk after each bout.

Ringside Analysis

Gameplay is straightforward. Once the contenders are selected, players move to the pre-fight conditioning phase. This will determine how seriously the higher-ranked fighter is taking his opponent. It is a clever way of showing how a Douglas-Tyson could occur. Next, one selects the number of rounds to be fought (from a three-round walk-out to the championship distance of fifteen rounds). From there, it is merely a matter of selecting a basic strategy at the opening and changing strategies between rounds as necessary.

Overall, Lance Haffner has taken a nice niche in the market by producing exactly the stat-based games that people want. It is particularly satisfying for boxing fans who want to establish those elaborate "What if?"s of endless sports debates. The present writer has a particular interest in setting up bouts where the great French Middleweight Marcel Cerdan and the superb Mexican Featherweight Salvador Sanchez (tragically enough, both killed in accidents at the height of their careers) compete against the boxers they *might* have faced had their careers continued. Personally, this reviewer ranks both in the all-time "Top Four" in their respective divisions and *TKO Pro Boxing* provides the forum for proving that case. Like other Lance Haffner Games, *TKO Pro Boxing* presents an interesting challenge for a reviewer. If one so wished, it would be easy to nitpick these products to death, but the bottom line is enjoyment. Version 2.1 of *TKO Pro Boxing* just adds to the enjoyment. Those who like other Lance Haffner games and/or find themselves serious about the sport of boxing should seriously consider adding this product to their stable of sports games. **cgw**

In our next issue, look for reviews of *4-D Boxing* from **Electronic Arts** and *ABC Wide World of Sports Boxing* from **Data East**.

Circle Reader Service #62 >>


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Will the Personal Computer Rest in Peace?

Reflections from the Seventh Annual Conference of the Software Publishers Association

Meetings of the **Software Publishers Association** might be considered something like the confluence of several tributaries into a larger river. Twice annually, the decision-making executives, positioning professionals and press representatives of several different interrelated industries convene together in order to pool their collective wisdom. Hardware manufacturers, creators of development tools, software developers, wholesale distributors, retail buyers and the computer press assemble to consider the status of both the consumer and business software industries. Just as the confluence of smaller streams into a larger river often causes considerable noise and a considerable amount of turbulence, so do the opinions of industry pundits and spokespersons at SPA meetings.

In September, representatives of the aforementioned group converged on Orlando, Florida to ponder both the present and the future of personal computer software. In fact, one panel was entitled...

The State of the Consumer Software Industry

Tom McGrew of **Britannica Software** was the first panelist to address the current situation. He stated that there was not currently *a* market (or channel) for consumer software, but that there were *eight* channels for the products: mass market (e.g. department stores), warehouse stores, mail order houses, discount houses, so-called "super" stores, "software only" retailers, electronics stores and direct orders. Hence, it is erroneous to speak arbitrarily of "the channel" and how it is doing. Rather, software publishers need to be aware of the different problems and opportunities associated with each venue.

McGrew noted that many publishers are still expecting a dominant computer platform to win over the average family's mindshare and "take over" the living room. He stated that this is rather naive, however, since he asserted that the "battle for the living room" was already over and that it was won by the dedicated game systems. He predicted that those systems that expect to utilize the family television as monitor were probably doomed to failure and predicted that there would be *more* fragmentation in terms of family computer use (more computers used in more rooms of the house) rather than less. His futuristic vision was for a home system where a file server was connected by "skinny wire" to everything in the house. In this way, he suggested, home computing could efficiently serve multiple needs without creating a bottleneck in the living room.

Brian Dougherty of **GeoWorks** took a different tack in his analysis of the current market status. Rather than conceding the battle for family mindshare to the dedicated game machines, he noted the current downtrend in **NES** sales. "When the first videogame industry went into its down-cycle, we saw the rise of the C-64," he observed. "Now, with the downturn in NES, we're seeing the same thing with PCs in Circuit City. Unfortunately, no one in the hardware market is doing anything right to reach the mass market."

To Dougherty, PCs will have their greatest chance at reaching the mass market through developments in portable computers. He thinks it will take a $500 machine in tandem with a pen-based interface to reach the average user. Dougherty's comments reflect a divergence between the entertainment/educational market which McGrew and Phil Adam (**Interplay Productions**) represented on the panel and his own productivity market. While it is likely that pen-based portables would improve productivity, it is less likely that they would be able to support the memory-hungry, graphics-intensive entertainment programs which today's computer gamers have come to expect.

Interplay's Adam responded to Dougherty's remarks by arguing that computer users in general and gamers in particular will have to continue to deal with a keyboard interface and lamented that this frightens some potential users. His analysis of current marketing trends were introduced with a statement on the dismal prospects for shelf space (i.e. the successful introduction of dedicated game machine titles in software stores and mass merchandisers means less shelf space for specific computer titles), but he lightened up somewhat by observing that sales of *DOS 5.0* had created in-store traffic that would probably generate impulse sales. However, Adam warned that publishers need to have their marketing plans in place in order to "hit the shelf running" because retailers did not have enough shelf space to allow a product to sit and be discovered. Now, more than ever, consumers need to have product awareness *before* the product hits the shelf. Otherwise, the fall products may not last until the actual Christmas buying season.

Consumer Software: The Media's Outlook on the Industry

Not only is the loss of shelf-space to other forms of electronic entertainment a dangerous omen, but another panel underlined another frightening fact for computer aficionados: computers are no longer newsworthy. Philip Elmer-Dewitt of *Time* magazine emphasized that the age when the computer could be considered the equivalent of "Man of the Year" (as it was during the '70s) is long past.

Charlie Kaye, a veteran **CBS News** producer, agreed with Elmer-Dewitt by observing that computers have become such ordinary tools that neither the computer nor the software is news. At one time, Kaye reminisced, it was news to discover that a procurer managed his stable of working girls by using a spreadsheet. He observes that so many people use spreadsheets in the modern world that covering such a story would cause nary a ripple in the listening/viewing audience of a broadcast news show.

The broader perspective of the lack of newsworthiness attached to computing does not bode well for capturing further mindshare among the masses. Indeed, it suggests that it will be harder and harder to gain the attention of the mass market via incremental advancements in either hardware or software. While the computer hobbyist press (represented on the panel by Peter Scisco, editor of *Compute* magazine) and the consumer electronic trade press (represented by Jim Wilcox of *Twice* magazine) will continue to cover these advancements, they are unlikely to serve the recruiting/evangelistic function formerly served by the mass media. It will take radical new developments to change lifestyles and open newer audiences for interactive entertainment.

Videogames: Are We Having Fun Yet?

For many software publishers, the prime savior or villain (depending, of course, on one's perspective) in the retail sector has been the videogame. For those who have plunged into support of the cartridge market (particularly, of late, the sixteen-bit cartridge market), the rewards have been handsome enough that the game machine market may be viewed as a rescuer from sales doldrums. For those who have focused on the personal computer market for their profits, the decline in shelf space and its attendant consequences (each product having to prove its ability to move in a matter of days or weeks) cause the cartridge phenomenon to be viewed with bitterness and suspicion.

For the former, there is good news. Joe Morici of **Capcom** believes that videogame distribution has become a larger part of software distribution in general and that it is likely to become even a larger part of the market mix with the success of the new sixteen-bit machines. In a reversal of Morici's written diatribe of Spring, 1991 (a letter in which he urged developers not to abandon the 8-bit market and its proven profit base), he conceded that the 8-bit market was declining rapidly and that 16-bit entertainment would rule the future.

For those who are uncertain of the future of computer entertainment, Kelly Flock of **Lucasfilm** offered a glimmer of hope. He assured the listeners that the **Lucasfilm** strategy with regard to platforms is to leverage existing assets and think in terms of *product lines* rather than platforms. He began by noting the difference in mindset between one type of platform and another. That is, he stated that *computer* gamers tend to be older and more mature, willing to accept a steep learning curve on a product while *videogame* players tend to be younger and need easy interfaces and short manuals.

Hence, he suggested that his company's flight simulation products would continue to be disk-based products, but that SCUMM

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(Script Creation Utility for Maniac Mansion) products like *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* and *LeChuck's Revenge: The Secret of Monkey Island II* were easily adaptable to CD-ROM platforms and videogame consoles due to their simplified interface. Flock continued to emphasize personal computer development, however, by noting that **Lucasfilm**'s optical strategy calls for upgrades (addition of voice, sound, additional graphics and/or second languages) for optical platforms rather than products developed especially for CD-ROM systems (CDTV, CD-I, MPC and others).

The skeptical perspective with regard to the continuation of the "personal computer" revolution was espoused by Trip Hawkins, chairman of **Electronic Arts**. Trip perceives that entertainment software companies can be placed in one of five positions: 1) entrenched (sticking with 8-bit NES development or staying strictly with floppy disk-based designs), 2) prayerful (hoping that CD-ROM will develop quickly), 3) nostalgic (continuing a commitment to floppy-based products and hoping NES dies quickly), 4) desperate (positioning one's company as innovative enough to do something completely different, whether there is an installed base or not) and 5) nomadic (a platform-independent existence in which one is continually pulling up one's figurative tent pegs and moving into new territory whenever the market demands it).

Hawkins offered strong words against the hardware manufacturers who cannot agree on CD-ROM standards and observed that there is not a CD platform on the horizon which can be reasonably expected to penetrate the "heartland" in the near future. He noted that the current crop of 16-bit cartridge machines is "pound for pound the best value of the consumer" and expounded **EA**'s success in reaching the 20-year-old **Sega Genesis** customers who have graduated from 8-bit videogames. He explained that **EA** has discovered that the **Sega** gamer includes *both* children and adults, whereas the personal computer customer was basically an adult market.

Prophetically, Hawkins *did* see a potential mass market for entertainment software which would combine a wide variety of customers—interactive cable television. His observations about the possibility of turning the computer processor which needs to be installed in cable television customers' homes (in order to take advantage of fiber optics' nearly 1,000 available channels as opposed to the nearly 100 theoretically accessible by current technology) into a genuine computer with optical storage. He gave no hint as to how that would be accomplished, but the subsequently announced joint venture (see "Inside The Industry") indicates that there must be a way to do so.

So, Do I Use My Computer for a Doorstop?

The general thrust of the conference for entertainment software publishers seemed to be that without broadening the market beyond its current width, the market cannot grow. Realizing that a market which is not growing will usually slip sidewise for a time, then decline, the publishers desire a solution. They realize they will not get the penetration necessary to become a "mass market" force until there is enough standardization that potential consumers are no longer confused, yet they have discovered that the "standard" desired in CD-ROM has become a plethora of standards (fifteen different standards in actuality).

Publishers experience a nightmare of frustration by just trying to support all the types of printers on the market, much less the different graphics card, monitor and sound card configurations. Now, it looks like CD-based platforms are not going to be the standardization which publishers had anticipated. Many panelists spoke out in frustration over how the hardware manufacturers were not providing a solution. Several voices called for the Consumer Software Section to decide what minimum configurations they would and would not support, as well as for the software publishers to standardize their drivers and install procedures. Alas, the same competitive edge that keeps the hardware manufacturers from standardizing separates the software publishers.

The truth is that personal computers will still be a vital factor in the software mix for the next few years. Any efforts toward standardization will only enhance the future of the personal computer as an entertainment device. Further fragmentation can only endanger its future. It is nowhere near time to turn one's personal computer into an anchor, but it is time for both the software industry and the consumers themselves to be concerned about the potential alienation of computer gaming's future. **CGW**



Letters from Paradise

Fame of the Year

I wanted to drop a small note, thanking you for the *CGW* 1991 Game of the Year award. Of all the awards and sales accolades *Wing Commander* has received, two make me the proudest. The Computer Game Developers' awards for sound, technical achievement and visual presentation, and the *CGW* Game of the Year. Why? The CGD awards are determined by other game developers, and the *CGW* awards are determined by the readers (real, live game players!) and the editorial staff. In short, the people who I design my games for, and therefore the ones who I strive to impress. Receiving the *CGW* award tells me I really did something right with *Wing Commander*, and that more than anything else is important.

So, it's with great pride that I tell the "unofficial" trade magazine of the computer game industry, thanks!

Chris Roberts
Origin

We're glad you took the time to share your feelings with not only our editorial staff, but with our readers. Of course, it never hurts to lead off a "Letters to the Editor" column with correspondence from an award-winning celebrity, either.

Call Me Reprehensible

After reading your October 1991 review of *Xenocide* I feel compelled to set the record straight and to clarify critical misinformation about our product *Xenocide*, a fast-paced action/adventure game for the IBM PC and Apple IIGS.

The review begins by introducing a book by the same title as our game. Your editor obviously has not done his homework. *Xenocide* was copyrighted by **Micro Revelations** two years before the book was released. Although the review mentions that the book was only "brought up as a point of reference," it can in no way, either by its title or material, be compared to the game *Xenocide*. The review states that "the meaning of the book's title, 'Xenocide,' is genocide of aliens, the extinguishing of an entire extraterrestrial race." Indeed, this may be the meaning the *book* is attempting to confer, but in no way does the *Xenocide* game manual suggest anything of "eradicating an intelligent alien species." In fact, the manual describes a period of 2.5 millennia that we have existed in peace. It is not until recently that the *human race* has been faced with extinction by genocide from the invading aliens! In fact, the *Xenocide* story line details the long and arduous steps that we have taken to help settle the invading aliens and accept them into human society! Indeed, this idea of peace-before-war is what our society today should be (and is) doing. Yet, the review calls the manner in which the *Xenocide* manual presents this process as "gleeful, thoughtless and irresponsible."

It is only after many attempts at peace that you, as the player, are called to defend the human race from extinction. Your goal in the game is to destroy three moons (all viciously captured by the invading aliens) orbiting your home planet. This is what *Xenocide* is about—destroying your own moons so as to remove the threat presented by the aliens there in hope of defending your own home world.

The review goes further to compare *Xenocide*'s documentation with that of fascist propaganda. Fascism is a form of government by dictatorship, forcible suppression of the people and belligerent racism, and is commonly associated with Adolph Hitler's Nazism. In no way, shape or form can *any part* of the *Xenocide* documentation be compared to the beliefs of a fascist doctrine. Describing a peaceful, democratic and defenseless society as is done in the story line as being fascist propaganda is grossly incorrect.

You owe your readers the respect to be sure all information about a product is factual and represents the true intent of the product before you print a review. *Xenocide* was never designed to solve "complex moral issues" as your review suggests it should. We have designed a 256 color game that combines the best of all worlds: a 3-dimensional Hovercraft level, a panoramic side view level with realistic effects of gravity, and a smooth-scrolling overhead view level, each with its own unique music score and graphics details.

I invite anyone who wishes to call or write us, free of charge, to request a copy of *Xenocide*'s game story line. I am sure they will find it sounds nothing like "fascist propaganda" and that the game is quite fun to play, the way computer games are meant to be!

Brian Lent, President
Micro Revelations, Inc.

On page 75 of CGW #87, *Charles Ardai noted that the game was in no way connected to Orson Scott Card's novel of the same name. Hence, there was no error in editorial fact-checking. It made no difference which came first, the novel or the game, because neither was related to the other. Only the title is common to both properties. Isn't it ironic, however, that a company can choose a title like* Xenocide *that both rhymes with genocide and evokes visions of* alien genocide *and then be offended when a reviewer and an editorial staff take them at their title's word. To be sure, "xenocide" is not in the dictionary, but by both sound and sense, it indicates the eradication of an entire species. Xeno- means alien and -cide references killing (usually murder, as in patricide, matricide, fratricide, suicide and homicide). That such an action is what is intended may be seen in the game's documentation when it says, "Lock and load. It's time to commit xenocide!" However one may try to stack it, the very name of the game puts the player in a mindset for* killing.

Now, admittedly, one of the staples of the action game diet is "killing." The sprite-o-cide involved in most action games is generally relatively bloodless and sterile. Yet, the emphasis in most of those games seems to be on the on-screen character's survival, the rescue of a helpless victim and the desire to defend something precious. The fiction in Xenocide *sets up a situation where the protagonist must destroy three moons and everything on them. Worse than that, the on-screen character is first presented as bored, reckless and restless, such that his motive in the game has more to do with his desire to find action than to truly defend his planet and his family (albeit the nobler motives are mixed in with the baser motives). Remember, the review stated that* Xenocide *is "...a very exciting action game," but questioned the moral underpinning of the game.*

The publisher seems offended that the reviewer compared the documentation to fascist propaganda. Perhaps, this is because they did their job too

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well. The section of the manual entitled "The Situation" describes a genetic hybrid that is so evil compared to the human civilization that is so good that one cannot help but wonder how "honest" the set-up actually is. According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Unabridged), *propaganda is the dissemination of information in such a way as to influence a person or group toward specific action. "The Situation" section is designed to prejudice the player toward the action summarized in the last sentence on page 3, "LOCK AND LOAD. IT'S TIME TO COMMIT XENOCIDE!" [sic]*

Now, to be sure, the CGW *audience is slightly different than many magazines which review computer games. Our average reader is older and, hopefully, more mature than those of most of the magazines that specialize in action games. Our readers look beyond the games to consider technologies used, philosophies expressed and real-world implications, as well as the more mundane concepts of interface, game mechanics and graphic/sound presentation. So, although we recognize the generally positive quality of a game like* Xenocide, *we will speak out against what we perceive as thoughtless presuppositions surrounding the game design. Frankly, we see very few reviewers who actually address these real-world considerations and we feel a responsibility to do so. It is not our intent to discourage anyone from playing a game which they might like, but it would be our fault if we never spoke about real-world implications and the state of the genre got progressively worse. That is why, even at the risk of going overboard,* CGW*'s publisher and editor decided to let the review run as it did and continue to stand behind our critic today.*

Self-UMSed Stamped Disk Envelope

Free upgrades for *UMS II* are available by sending the original disks in a self-addressed, stamped disk mailer to: Intergalactic Development, Inc., 1427 Washington Street, Davenport, Iowa 52804. We will also include our 12-page newsletter with helpful hints, questions and answers. The upgrade is also available as a download on CompuServe [GAMEPUB DL13].

D. Ezra Sidran
Intergalactic Development

Doesn't Ad Up

CGW keeps getting better and better with each issue—keep up the superlative work! I do have two gripes, however: Where is your CDTV coverage and why do you give advertisers awards for the "best ad" in your magazine? These awards might be relevant in an issue of *Advertising Age*, but not in a computer gaming magazine.

[no name]
Denver, CO

We would like to urge readers to sign their comments when they send letters to the editorial staff. Normally, we do not print them, but this reader asked some relevant questions which we will attempt to answer. First, according to a **Commodore** *representative, there are only about 30,000 CDTV consoles in the hands of consumers in the United States. Although the company is allegedly broadcasting television ads in selective markets and the machines are supposed to be available in mass market outlets, they have yet to make their presence known in the real world. We would like to see CDTV succeed as an extension of the Amiga, as well as a stand-alone machine. However, we feel like its strongest use is as a game machine and* **Commodore** *has done its best not to position the machine as such. Thus far, there is no reason to cover the machines. If CDTV becomes more available and more distinctive games are published, we will be glad to cover CDTV.*

Second, the "Top Ad" awards are not out of place in Computer Gaming World *for a very good reason. Since* CGW *is read by most of the decision-makers in the entertainment software industry, allowing our readers to vote on the "Top Ad" is a means of letting the readers tell the industry which ads are most effective and best meet their needs. Further, entertainment software companies are, by and large, too small to be of much notice for the mass market awards presented in* Advertising Age. *Hence, this more focused competition offers an incentive for companies who would not ordinarily be competing to continue to improve and take risks in their advertising strategies.*

Break on Through

I hope to see more previews of technology breakthrough games, such as *Ultima VII* and *Strike Commander*, in your magazine. Both games seem to warrant extensive coverage.

Raffey Tehan
Albany, CA

We will continue to try to feature sneak previews of games which have compelling new technology, features or subject matter. With the amount of competition in the print media, it is unlikely that CGW *will be able to sneak preview* all *the hot new titles, but it is sure a given that we will try!*

SimGame Designer

In regard to a possible *SimCity 2*, great! May I suggest various sizes of roads (from residential two-lane roads to super-highways). To capture the feel of real city zoning, the size and shape restrictions of the individual zone 'types' will need to be eliminated. Whoever heard of a city made up of only parallel and perpendicular divisions?

Sewer lines, storm lines and creeks, waste water treatment plants, buses and other forms of public transportation (an all-bike city?), dams and hydroelectric power...I can't wait.

Mike Niblett
Santa Clara, CA

Here's looking at "2," kid. **cgw**

Inside the Industry

"New" Hollywood Meets "Old" Hollywood in New Joint Venture

ELECTRONIC ARTS®

As Of October 2, 1991, the para-phrased 19th Century editorial about the weather (which said that everybody talks about it, but nobody does anything about it) no longer applied to the term "multimedia." Now, the combined electronic presentation of audio, video and data called multimedia has spawned a logical partnership.

The logical partnership for multimedia always seemed to be a joint venture between traditional entertainment media corporations (motion picture, recording and/or print-media) and entertainment software companies. **Time Warner**, **Electronic Arts** and the venture capital firm of **Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers** (the firm which helped capitalize **Lotus**, **Symantec** and **EA**, among others) have announced just such a joint venture.

The name of the new corporation created by the entertainment triumvirate is **SMSG, Inc.** (San Mateo Software Group) and signals a myriad of new possibilities for reaching the mass market through interactive products which involve "multimedia." The new company will be located in San Mateo (home of **Electronic Arts**) and will be led by W. M. (Trip) Hawkins III, chairman of EA and president/CEO of **SMSG, Inc.**. Officially, Hawkins is expected to split time 50/50 between companies.

The creation of the company means that Sony is not going to be the only consumer electronics company with enough experience in multiple fields within the entertainment industry to influence software developers to play in their arena. Many industry observers have watched Sony's expansion into new entertainment media with some trepidation.

Although Time-Warner brings certain passive media properties to the "party," as it were, astute observers should be aware that the large media conglomerate is already a software publisher (**Warner New Media**) and involved with "interactive" cable television experiments. So, the new company's charter is not immediately clear.

What *is* clear is that **Time-Warner** would like to move their cable-television operators into the world of fiber-optics, potentially expanding the available channels for cable recipients from 60-100 available channels to 1000 or more. In order to keep from having to wire every house with fiber-optics, cable operators would like to place (theoretically) a sophisticated computer processor in every cable customer's receiver box. This would mean that the processor could contact a neighborhood node (like computer modems access), determine the availability of desired programming and download the custom programming to the cable customer's box. Since the processor would already be on board the cable box and the mass media customer would (presumably) want to have such a box to maximize his/her available programming, it seems possible to build this box as a multi-functional multimedia computer.

None of the three companies have announced that building such a box is definitely their intention, but such a move seems logical, given the recent track records and interests of the partners. What is definite is that the formation of **SMSG** means that three companies *have combined to produce not* only potential entertainment on demand, but *customized* entertainment. Trip Hawkins has always had a vision in which entertainment software would change the world for the better. If the creation of **SMSG** does what it appears it will do, the new company will potentially solve three issues which Hawkins has often addressed in recent years: standardization, limitations of CD-ROM and the need to reach the mass market.

Mediagenic Files For Chapter 11 Bankruptcy

Once one of the largest entertainment software companies, **Mediagenic**, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on October 7, 1991. Officials at the company suggest that 1990's $20-million-plus judgment in favor of **Magnavox** (in finalizing a long-term litigation over patented on-screen action) amounted to the final straw, but industry observers cite vacillating management and disappointing sales as significant causes, as well. **Mediagenic**'s reorganization plan calls for almost all of the company's indebtedness to be converted into equity (i.e. common stock). A committee of unsecured creditors and the company's two secured creditors have already approved the plan, which would, in essence, mean that existing creditors would own 80% of the common stock and the current roster of stockholders would have their holdings reduced to approximately 4.5% of the outstanding common stock.

Although the existing common stock was delisted from the NASDAQ system by the National Association of Securities Dealers, the agreement credits the conversion of debt to stock as being worth approximately $17 million. **Mediagenic** also notes that the reorganization *under Chapter 11* bankruptcy laws will not affect either its European or Japanese subsidiaries. The company also insists that it is still planning to release *Leather Goddesses of Phobos II*, *The Lost Treasures of Infocom* and other Christmas releases as scheduled. Neither the European or Japanese (**Activision**) offices will require any reorganization.

Broderbund Files For Initial Public Offering

Broderbund Software announced on October 11, 1991 that it had filed a registration statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission pursuant to releasing an initial public offering of common stock (IPO). Alex, Brown & Sons is the principal underwriter of the offering, which is expected to consist of 3,257,184 shares of common stock. The lower end of expectations for price per share would be $9.25 and the estimated upper end of the price range would be $11.00 per share. The total amount of the common stock so issued will be sold by existing shareholders.

In the wake of the successful **Microprose** IPO, prospects seem positive for the **Broderbund** offering. Speculation would suggest that the placement of such an amount of stock from existing shareholders may indicate that long-term investors, such as **Jostens, Inc.**, may be reducing both their stake in **Broderbund** and their current high level of input in the latter's future direction. If so, this would place more authority in the hands of **Broderbund**'s present corporate management and allow them more freedom in planning the company's future. **CGW**

Broderbund Software®

SPA TOP 25 HITS LIST

MS-DOS Games

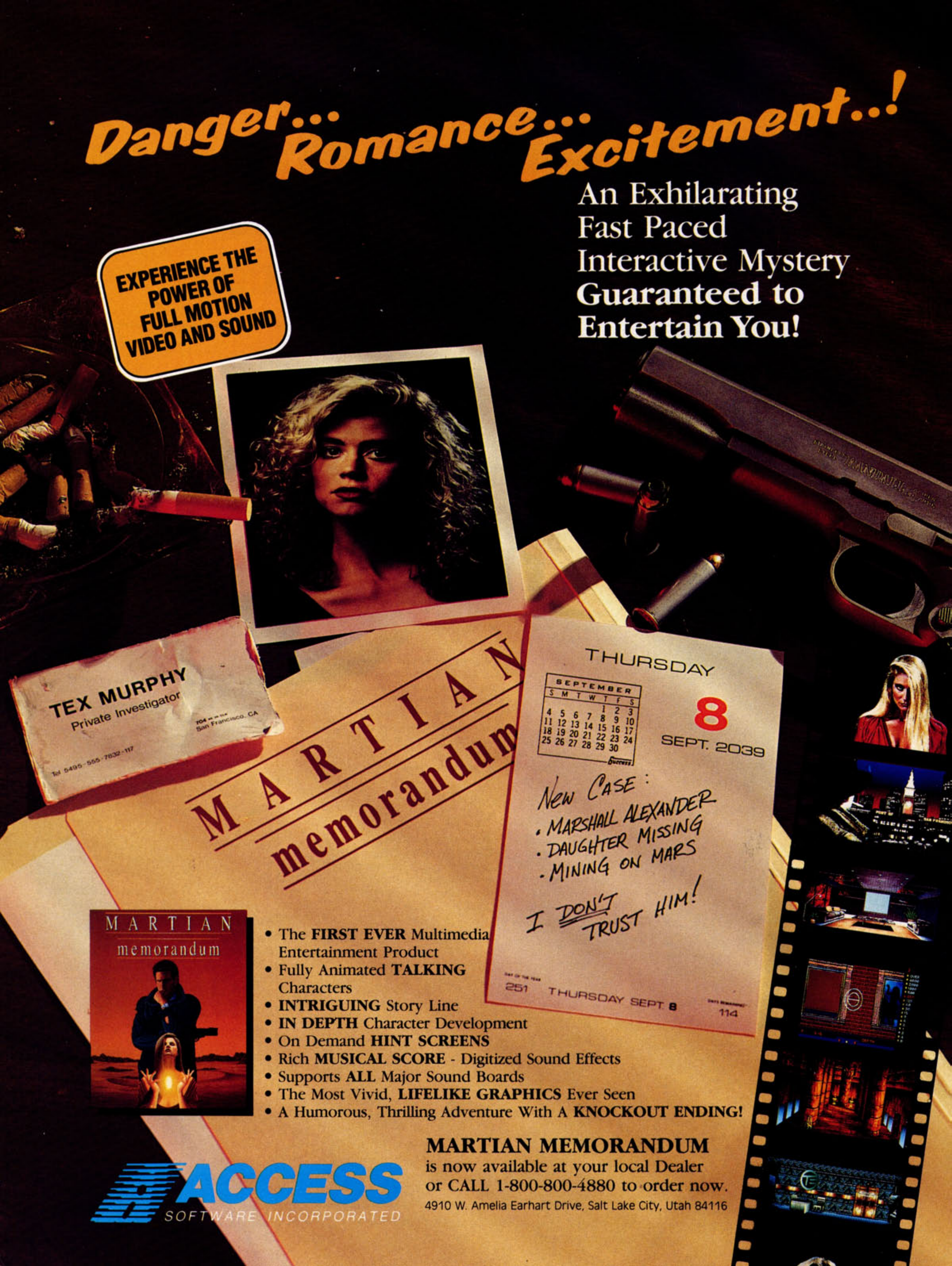
August, 1991

This Month	Last Month	Title and Publisher
1.	*	*AD&D: Gateway to the Savage Frontier* (SSI)
2.	*	*Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* (Lucasfilm Games)
3.	1	*Castles* (Interplay Productions)
4.	6	*King's Quest V* (Sierra On-Line)
5.	2	*Jetfighter II* (Velocity)
6.	5	*Wing Commander I* (Origin)
7.	3	*Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* Electronic Arts
8.	8	*SimCity* (Maxis)
9.	9	*Links* (Access)
10.	*	*Links – Pinehurst* (Access)
11.	4	*Terminator* (Bethesda Softworks)
12.	12	*Flight Simulator* (Microsoft)
13.	14	*Lemmings* (Psygnosis)
14.	7	*Eye of the Beholder* (SSI)
15.	16	*Megatraveller 2* (Paragon)
16.	13	*SimEarth* (Maxis)
17.	11	*Space Quest IV* (Sierra On-Line)
18	*	*Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball* (SSI)
19.	21	*Hoyle's Book of Games II – Solitaire* (Sierra On-Line)
20.	22	*Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf* (Accolade)
21.	15	*Where in America's Past is Carmen Sandiego?* (Broderbund)
22.	17	*Wing Commander Secret Missions Disk* (Origin)
23.	19	*A-10 Tank Killer* (Dynamix)
24.	23	*GamePack 1* (Software Toolworks)
25.	25	*Where in the USA is Carmen Sandiego?* (Broderbund)

*Not in July Top 25

Source: Software Publishers Association

CGW


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SEPT. 2039
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· Daughter Missing
· Mining on Mars
I DON'T TRUST HIM!
251
THURSDAY SEPT. 8
114
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COMPUTER WARGAMING WORLD

Computer Wargaming World is published twelve times a year as a free supplement in *Computer Gaming World.*

II Samuel 22:35

Computer Strategy and Wargames: The 1900-1950 Epoch

Part II (M-Z) of an Annotated Paiktography

by M. Evan Brooks

This article concludes the annotated paiktography (list of games) which began in *CGW* #88. It should be noted that the ratings are an individual preference and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher or editorial staff of this magazine. Also, please note the platform availability; a five-star game on an Atari 800 that is several years old is not of the same sophistication as a new product designed for a PC 486-33. However, it has been given its rating for what it did and, to a lesser extent, what it still does, and perhaps for the place it holds in this reviewer's heart and memory.

These ratings may generate a deluge of complaints, but again, these are intrinsically subjective and a discriminating reader should be able to temper the ratings with this writer's normal reviews in order to ascertain the inherent biases. If any readers have additions/corrections/modifications (particularly to help fill in missing data), please send them to me in care of this magazine or via modem on GEnie (address: M.E. Brooks).

Legend: xxx = Data not available.

Line 1: *Title*

Line 2: (Machine Format [**A**tari / **Com**modore / **Ap**ple II / **T**RS-80 / Apple II**GS** / **Am**iga / Atari **ST** / **M**acintosh / **I**BM]; Issue of *CGW* in which that game was mentioned; **bold print** refers to major article) Company / Designer / Date of Publication / Price (O/P: Out of Print)/ Rating:

0	= Good use as a magnet holder
*	= Avoid
**	= Marginal
***	= Average to Good
****	= Very Good
*****	= Highly Recommended
+	= "and a half"
N-R	= Not Rated)

Line 3: Difficulty (**Beg**inner/**Inter**mediate/**Adv**anced); Environment (**Land**/**Nav**al/**Air**/**Dip**lomatic); Level* (**Tac**tical/**Op**erational/**Str**ategic); # of Players (M: modem option)

Tactical: man-to-man up to company level. Turns represent seconds to hours.
Operational: battalion-level to division-level. Turns represent hours to weeks.
Strategic: corps-level to theater army or higher. Turns represent weeks to years.

Military Unit	# of Men	
Fire Team	2-	3
Squad	9-	12
Platoon	40-	50
Company	120-	150
Battalion	500-	1,000
Brigade	3,000-	5,000
Division	10,000-	15,000
Corps	20,000-	80,000
Army	100,000-	up

Malta Storm
(Am/ST/I; #65,72,**74**) **Simulations Canada**; Robert Crandall; 1990; $60.00; N-R
Adv/Nav/Op-Str
1-2

A simulation of the battle for the Mediterranean between December 1941 and August 1942 utilizing three-week turns.

Malta Strike
(Ap/T) **Discovery**; Dave Arneson; 1980; O/P; N-R
Beg/Air/Tac
1

Tactical combat in the World War II Mediterranean theater.

Mare Nostrum
(Ap/I) **General Quarters**; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; xxx; $35.00; N-R
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op
0-2; M

World War II action between the Royal Navy and the Italian Fleet.



Brooks of Arabia: the author in Kuwait

Marianas Turkey Shoot
(AP/I) **General Quarters**; Owen P. Hall, Jr.;

xxx; $35.00; N-R
Bat/Nav/Tac-Op
0-2; M

The largest air carrier battle in history, as well as the most one-sided. WWII action with the last gasp of the Japanese.

Metz-Cobra
(C/A) **DKG**; xxx; xxx; O/P; N-R
Int/Land/Op
1-2

Break-out from the Normandy beachhead, 1944.

Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan
(I) **General Quarters**; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; 1987; $35.00; N-R
Int/Nav/Op-Str
1-2

Now in its second (1989) edition.

Midway Campaign
(A; #37) **Avalon Hill**; National Microcomputer Associates; 1980; xxx; *
Beg/Nav-Air/Op
1

An operational/strategic simulation of the Midway campaign, this game has been superseded by improvements in computer design. Primitive graphics and gameplay do little to enhance its durability.

MiGs and Messerschmitts
(Ap/T) **Discovery**; Dave Wesley and Ross Maker; 1980; O/P; N-R
Beg/Air/Tac
1

Tactical World War II air combat in the East.

Miracle at Midway
(Ap/I; #65,66) **General Quarters**; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; 1989; $35.00; N-R
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op
0-2; M

The decisive WWII battle in the Pacific.

Moscow Campaign
(I/Ap/ST) **Simulations Canada**; Stephen St. John; 1987; $60.00; N-R
Adv/Land/Op
1-2

A simulation of Operation Typhoon and White Storm (30 August 1941 - 13 February 1942).

Normandy, Battles in
(C/Ap; #40,**42,54**) **Strategic Studies Group**; Roger Keating and Ian Trout; 1987; $39.95; **
Adv/Land/Op
1-2

The Normandy invasion and break-out, this Strategic Studies Group simulation is marred by the utilization of the Battlefront system in a situation where it is inapplicable. The historical use of fire and maneuver tends to bog down in a war of attrition; corps maneuverability becomes mired in a morass of engagements which yield ahistorical results.

Normandy, Battle for
(A/Ap/C/I; #3.4,37) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; David Landrey; 1984; O/P; ***
Int/Land/Op
1-2

An operational simulation of the invasion of Normandy, this game is easy to learn, although the documentation covering the actual landings leaves much to be desired. A solid intermediate level game in 1984, it is dated and suffers from a lack of joystick input, yet this reviewer still enjoys it.



Panzer Battles

North Atlantic Convoy Raider
(xxx) **Avalon Hill**; xxx; xxx; O/P; N-R
xxx
One of Avalon Hill's earliest releases, a simple strategy game based on World War II naval strategy.

Objective: Kursk
(A/C; #**5.2**) **DKG**; Mark Sommerlott; 1984; O/P; N-R
Int/Land/Str
1-2

Objective: Kursk
(A/C; #4.4,37) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Gary Grigsby; 1984; O/P; **
Adv/Land/Tac-Op
1-2

A tactical/operational simulation of the largest tank battle in World War II, it is very detailed. However, user input is tedious via keyboard and the game system overall is somewhat bland.

*Operation Com*Bat*
(Am; #75) **Merit**; Scott Lamb; 1990; $49.95; N-R
?/Land/Tac
1-2; M

Abstract wargame.

Operation Keystone
(I; #28,**31**) **Overt Strategic Simulations**; T.J. Peto, Jr.; 1986; O/P; *
Int/Nav/Tac
1

World War II submarine operations in the Pacific. Similar to both *Silent Service* and *GATO* (cf. infra), but less interesting than either.

Operation Market-Garden
(A/C/Ap/I; #5.3,**5.4**,37) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; 1986; Chuck Kroegel and David Landrey; O/P; *+
Air/Land/Op
1-2

A tactical/operational simulation of the largest Airborne operation of World War II, this game suffers from graphic sensory deprivation—determining the road network is a lesson in frustration. Also, input may not be readjusted in mid-play, and overall, the user interface is both clumsy and unforgiving.

Operation Overlord
(Ap/ST; #32) **Simulations Canada**; Stephen St. John; 1986; $60.00; N-R
Adv/Land/Op
1-2

A simulation of the first eleven weeks following D-Day (6 June - 28 August 1942).

Operation Whirlwind
(A;#3.5,37) **Broderbund**; Roger Damon; 1984; O/P; **+
Beg/Land/Tac
1

Ancestor of *Field of Fire, Panzer Grenadier* and *Wargame Construction Set* (cf. infra), this tactical simulation of an urban assault during World War II remains fun to play, despite its age. However, overall, it has not aged all that gracefully.

Overlord
(ST) **CSS**; Ken Wright; 1989; xxx; N-R
Int/Land/Op
1

A divisional-level simulation of the Invasion of Normandy.

P-51 Mustang Flight Simulator
(M; #60) **Bullseye**; Donald A. Hill, Jr.; 1989; $59.95; N-R
Air/Tac
1-2; M

Cut from the same cloth as the *Fokker Triplane Simulator* (cf infra) but slightly more detailed.

Pacific Storm: The Midway Campaign
(Am/ST/I) **Simulations Canada**; xxx; 1991; $60.00; N-R
?/Nav/Tac-Op
1-2

Pacific Storm: The Solomons Campaign
(Am/ST/I) **Simulations Canada**; xxx; 1991; $60.00; N-R
?/Nav/Tac-Op
1-2

An operational simulation of the South Pacific (1942-1943) in two-week turns.

Panzer Battles
(C/Ap/I; #68,69) **Strategic Studies Group**; Roger Keating and Ian Trout, 1989; $39.95; ***
Adv/Land/Tac
0-2

The *Battlefront* (cf. infra) system on the East Front, with six scenarios (Minsk, Moscow, Kharkov, Prokhorovka, Kanev and Korsun). Interestingly enough, Moscow, Kharkov, Kanev and Korsun have all been the subjects of paper wargames and the computer offers a different perspective.

Panzer Grenadier
(A/C/Ap; #5.5,37) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Roger Damon; 1985; O/P; **
Beg/Land/Tac
1

A tactical simulation of armored warfare on the Eastern Front during World War II, it is marred by historical inaccuracy. Reconnaissance by fire is overemphasized, and opportunity fire is hit-and-miss. It lacks the panache and elan to yield an enduring game experience.

Panzerjagd
(A/C; #4.6,37) **Avalon Hill**; Richard W. Scorupski; 1984; $30.00; *
Beg/Land/Tac
1

A tactical simulation of armored warfare during World War II, it is obviously dated by newer efforts and has little to recommend it today.

Panzer Strike

(C/Ap/ST/I; #45,**47**) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Gary Grigsby; 1988; $44.00/$49.95; ***+
Adv/Land/Tac
0-2

A tactical simulation of World War II small-unit actions in the West and East Fronts. Very detailed, but the lack of a panoramic battlefield view often allows one to lose track of objectives, and it may take hours to complete a "thirty-minute" assault.

Panzer War
(A; #4.6) **Windcrest Software**; George A. Schwenk; 1983; O/P; N-R
Beg/Land/Op
1-2

Operational battles on the Russian Front played for amusement, *not* historical accuracy.

Patton Strikes Back
(M/I) **Broderbund**; Chris Crawford; 1991; $59.95; N-R
Int/Air/Tac-Op
1-2

Chris Crawford's forthcoming entry covering the Battle of the Bulge (World War II).

Patton Versus Rommel
(C/M/I; #35) **Mindscape**; Chris Crawford; 1987; $14.95; ***+
Int/Land/Op
1-2

An operational campaign in France, 1944, this simulation was characterized by innovative play systems marred by difficult trafficability and passage of lines.

Perfect General, The
(I; **86**) **QQP**; Mark Baldwin; $59.95; 1991; N-R
Int/Land/Tac
1-2; M

By the designer of *Empire* (cf. infra), this abstract game of tactical battles looks like it will be very interesting with its multiple scenarios.

P.O.W.
(Am) **ActionWare**; xxx; xxx; $39.95; **+
Beg/Land/Tac
1

An straight arcade "shoot-em-up." Distinguished by excellent graphics and sheer fun, this game provides mindless entertainment.

Power at Sea
(C;#46) **Accolade**; Distinctive Software, Inc.; 1987; xxx; *
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op
1

The WWII battle of Leyte Gulf is presented with a tremendously reduced order of battle and the combat itself is limited to arcade resolution.

Prelude to Jutland
(Ap/I; #65) **General Quarters**; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; 1986; $35.00; **
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op
0-2; M

The preliminary battles of 1915 and the Grand Battle itself. Minimalist conception of graphics and user-clumsy interface.

PT-109
(M/I; #48,**51**) **Spectrum HoloByte**; Gordon Walton; 1988; O/P; **+
Adv/Nav/Tac
1

PT boat tactics in the South Pacific; relatively good graphics and game play on a subject rarely covered, but it's no Jack Kennedy.

Pursuit of the Graf Spee
(Ap) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Joel Billings; 1982; O/P; N-R
Int/Nav/Tac
1-2

Simulation of the early World War II battle off Montevideo Harbor. Very dated.

RAF: Battle of Britain
(Ap/T) **Discovery**; Dave Arneson, Dave Wesley and Ross Maker; 1979; O/P; N-R
Beg/Air/Op-Str
1

A simulation of up to 12 fighter aircraft in the World War II Battle of Britain, complete with wire-frame graphics.

Red Baron
(I; #74,**75**,76,**81**,83,84) **Dynamix**; Damon Slye; 1991; $59.95; *****
Adv/Air/Tac-Op
1

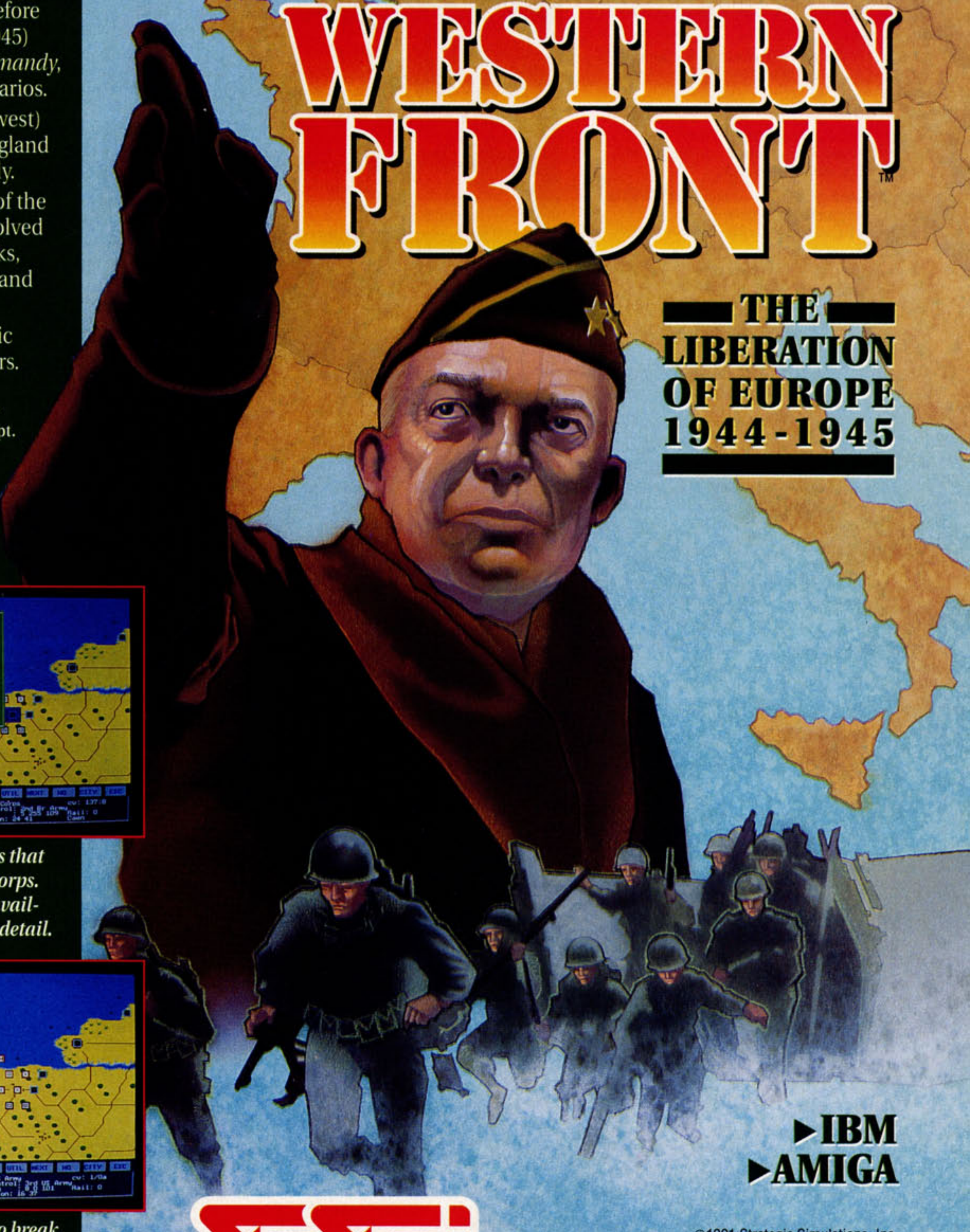
The best World War I air simulator ever done. Graphics, sound, historical accuracy and superb game play combine into a complete experience.

Rising Sun, The
(Ap/I) **General Quarters**; Owen P. Hall, Jr.;

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xxx; $35.00; N-R
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op
0-2; M

The Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). An interesting period that has been rarely simulated.

Road to Moscow
(C; #40,41) **Ba'rac Limited**; Phil Gardocki and Greg Mojher; 1984; O/P; N-R
Adv/Land/Op-Str
1-2

A corps-level simulation of World War II's War in the East (for a more contemporary treatment, cf. *Second Front*).

Rock of Stalingrad, The. Later published by **Game Designers' Workshop**.
(Ap) **Benchmark Software**; Stephen Newburg; 1983; O/P; N-R
xxx
xxx

An early attempt to simulate the World War II epic Battle of Stalingrad. No graphics.

Rommel: Battles for North Africa
(C/Ap/I; #50,**51**,64;65) **Strategic Studies Group**; Roger Keating and Ian Trout; 1988; $39.95; ***
Adv/Land/Op
0-2

Rommel in the *Battlefront* (cf. infra) system, this simulation offers several famous battles of the African Campaign as well as the "design-your-own" option.

Rommel: Battles for Tobruk
(A/Ap/C; #**32**,37,48,**50**) **Game Designers' Workshop**; Frank Chadwick; 1986; O/P; *+
Adv/Land/Tac-Op
1-2

A tactical/operational simulation of World War II's desert battles, this game is very detailed and complex. Supply and air rules are among the most complex ever devised, but sheer unplayability and ennui will deter most players. The graphics deserve special mention, since they look like someone ate a Big Mac and threw up onto the screen.

Rommel at el Alamein
(Ap/ST/I; #52) **Simulations Canada**; Bill Nichols; 1988; $60.00; **+
Adv/Land/Op
1-2

Operational study of the World War II battle (1 July - 6 November, 1942). SimCan's philosophy of producing fog-of-war-intensive command simulations works reasonably well in this theater of war.

Rommel at Gazala
(Ap/ST/I; #30,**40**,41) **Simulations Canada**; Stephen St. John; 1986; $60.00; **+
Adv/Land/Op
1-2

The Battle for Tobruk (26 May - 27 June 1942). Again, SimCan's fog-of-war approach works reasonably well for the desert warfare depicted herein.

Russia
(C/Ap; #39,**40**,41) **Strategic Studies Group**; Roger Keating and Ian Trout; 1987; $39.95; ****+
Adv/Land/Str
1-2

A simulation of the entire Eastern Front (1941-1945), it is similar to both *War in Russia* and *Second Front* (cf. infra). However, it offers a more impressionistic and less quantitative analysis. Even with its age, this product is highly recommended, and it is to be hoped that a MS-DOS version will be forthcoming.



Rommel: Battles for North Africa

Sands of Fire
(M/I; #**74**) **Three-Sixty Pacific**; Gordon Walton; 1990; $49.95; **
Beg/Air/Tac
1

World War II North Africa from the tank commander's cupola, this game offers both arcade and simulation play. One of the more interesting graphic/sound aspects is the gun ejecting an empty shell with a satisfying "thunk." but in many ways, "thunk" also describes the game play.

Search and Destroy
(C/I; #43) xxx; xxx; xxx; O/P; *
Beg/Nav/Tac
1

World War II destroyer simulation, distinguished by nothing of importance. More reminiscent of an arcade-type product, with certain similarities to *Destroyer* (cf. infra).

Second Front
(I/Am; #65,68,**72**,**73**,85) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Gary Grigsby; 1990; $59.95; ****+
Adv/Land/Op-Str
0-2

The Eastern Front of World War II, covered from start to finish. Different levels allow one to see losses taken down to squad level. Replace commanders, build armies, seize objectives. It's all here, and this is *the* simulation to have on the Eastern Front.

Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe
(I; #74,76,**77**,**88**) **Lucasfilm**; Lawrence Holland; 1991; $69.95; ****+
Int/Air/Tac-Op
1

Lucasfilm's newest entry, finally appearing after a one-year delay. It places emphasis on the bomber offensive over Germany (1943-45), with B-17s and German fighters such as the Me-262 jet. It features excellent graphics and attempts to portray tactical, operational and strategic levels (and generally succeeds).

Sherman M4
(I) **Lorelei**; xxx; xxx; xxx; **
Beg/Land/Tac
1

An arcade-type treatment of desert warfare during World War II.

Sieg in Afrika
(C/Ap; #4.5,**5.1**) **Simulations Canada**; xxx; 1984; $60.00; N-R
Adv/Land/Op
1-2

The desert campaign (1940-1943) covered from a strategic viewpoint.

Silent Service
(C/I/A/Ap/Am/II-GS; #**25**,**26**,**30**,37) **MicroProse**; Sid Meier; 1985; $19.95; **
Adv/Nav/Tac
1

A tactical simulation of submarine warfare in the South Pacific during World War II. Detailed rules, historical accuracy and layers of complexity made this simulation a necessity in every gamer's library when it first appeared. But it has been rendered obsolete by time and superseded by *Silent Service II*.

Silent Service II
(I; #74,**76**) **MicroProse**; Arnold Hendrick; 1990; 59.95; ****+
Adv/Nav/Tac
1

A remake of *Silent Service*, this game brings what was a fine simulation up to state-of-the-art graphics and gameplay. It does not seem to have engendered the rousing reception that its predecessor received, but it remains the best World War II submarine simulation available.

Sky Shark
(C; #61) **Taito**; xxx; 1989; xxx; N-R
Beg/Air/Tac
1

A World War II-era arcade aerial "shoot-'em-up."

Sniper!
(#**61**,63) **CompuServe**; Steve Estvanik; xxx; xxx; ***
Air/Land/Tac
1-multi

Based on the **SPI** game of boardgame fame, the on-line version of man-to-man infantry combat uses ASCII characters to provide satisfying human-to-human competition for those tired of competing with "artificial" intelligence.

Sonar Search
(C) **Signal Computer Consultants**; xxx; 1984; O/P; N-R
Int/Nav/Tac
1

Early simulation of battles in the North Atlantic during WWII (the player's three destroyers against five computer submarines). One of the first computer wargames to use a keyboard template as a game aid.

Spitfire Ace
(A/C; #4.4) **MicroProse**; Sid Meier; 1984; O/P; *
Beg/Air/Tac
1

An early combat simulator, which has been severely wrinkled by age.

Spitfire '40
(C/Ap; #69) **Avalon Hill**; Mirrorsoft Ltd.; 1986; $35.00; 0
Int/Air/Tac
1

World War II flight simulator; poor graphics and poorer execution. It flies like a bus with the maneuverability of a tractor-trailer.

Stalingrad Campaign
(C/I/Ap/ST; #**37**) **Simulations Canada**; Bill Nichols; 1987; $60; *
Adv/Land/Op-Str
1

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An operational/strategic simulation of the 1942-1943 Russian campaign, this game fails due to lack of user implementation, poor documentation and the sheer inability of the game to deliver any semblance of player participation.

Storm Across Europe
(C/Am/I; #62,65,74,**75**) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Dan Cermak; 1989; $39.95/59.95; ***
Int/Land-Nav/Op-Str
1-3

Similar to the boardgame *Hitler's War*, except the computer interface is much more awkward. The graphics are primitive and the documentation somewhat sparse. Yet, as a game covering the entire Eastern and Western Fronts of World War II, it can be fun to play.

Sub Battle Simulator
(C/I/Ap; #36,**38**) **Epyx**; Gordon Walton; 1987; O/P; ***
Adv/Nav/Tac
1

World War II submarine simulator in either the Atlantic or Pacific theater. Time has made this effort obsolescent, but it did have some interesting features (and some not so interesting, e.g. one's submarine could claw its way across the coast of Spain rather than transiting through the Straits of Gibraltar).

Submarine Commander
(A) **Thorn**; xxx; xxx; O/P; *
Beg/Nav/Tac
1

Virtually the first submarine simulator, it was innovative in its time, but now offers virtually nothing for the simulation gamer.

Surrender at Stalingrad
(C/A; #37) **DKG**; Marc Summerlott; 1986; O/P; *+
Int/Land/Op
1-2

The World War II southern offensive in the East carried on in DKG's inimitable format, i.e. primitive graphics, inadequate user interface and overall slowness of execution.

TAC
(A/C/Ap/I; #3.4,37) **Avalon Hill**; Ralph H. Bosson; 1984; $30.00; *
Beg/Land/Tac
1-2

A tactical simulation of armored conflict during World War II. Similar to *PanzerJagd* (cf. infra), and just as obsolescent.

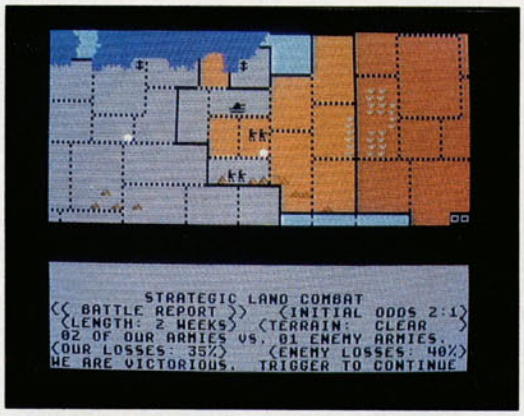
Tanks and Squads
(xxx) **C&C Software**; Al Winfree and Tim Deane; 1982; O/P; N-R
xxx
2

Ostensibly a "simulation" of World War II Eastern Front tactics, it is extremely primitive.

Tanktics
(A/Ap) **Avalon Hill**; Chris Crawford; 1982; xxx; **+
Int/Land/Tac
1

Essentially a computer-assisted boardgame, *Tanktics* features hypothetical World War II German-Russian armor battles. The player can only play the German. It is notable as one of the first computer wargames.

Their Finest Hour
(I; #65,66,**67,75,77,82**,83) **Lucasfilm**; Lawrence Holland; 1989; $59.95; ****+



Storm Across Europe

Int/Air/Tac-Op
1

The Battle of Britain done in Lucasfilm's inimitable style. Multiple planes, a campaign option and a design-your-own scenario option offer an outstanding product.

Third Reich, The Rise and Decline of the
(Am,ST; #62;**86**) **Avalon Hill**; Thalean Software; 1992; ?; N-R
Adv/Land-Air-Sea/Str
0-2

Forthcoming translation of the classic board wargame to a computer format. Wargamers are expectant, but have some reservations because of earlier disappointments in attempting to translate great boardgames into reputable computer games.

Tigers in the Snow
(A/C/Ap; #37) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Chuck Kroegel and David Landry; 1981; O/P; *
Beg/Land/Op
1-2

An operational simulation of the Battle of the Bulge, its primitive graphics, play mechanics and poor user interface have been superseded by more recent efforts.

Tobruk: The Clash of Armour
(C; #**49**) **DataSoft**; Steve R. Williams; 1987; xxx; *+
Beg/Land/Tac-Op
1

A tactical/operational "simulation" of the African campaign covering the Battle of Gazala with a strong arcade element interwoven into the product. Rather than complementing each other with ease, the simulation and arcade aspects denigrate each other's appeal.

Top Gunner Collection
(A/C) **MicroProse**; Sid Meier; 1986; O/P; *
Beg/Air/Tac
1

Three arcade games in a package, *Hellcat Ace* (cf. infra) is the only one within these review parameters. One of the first combat flight simulators, this is of interest today only to the collector.

Torpedo Fire
(Ap) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; John Lyon; 1981; O/P; N-R
Int/Nav/Tac
2

Submarine warfare in World War II in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. Very early effort with no computer opponent.

To the Rhine
(Ap/ST/I; #43) **Simulations Canada**; Stephen Newburg; xxx; $60.00; N-R
Adv/Land/Op
1-2

The War in the West, 29 August - 11 December 1944.

The Train: Escape to Normandy
(I; #45,**47**) **Accolade**; Artech Digital Entertainments; 1988; xxx; **
Beg/Land/Tac
1

A grade-B war movie made into a computer game of the same caliber. It ignores the fact that the French Resistance of World War II was an ineffective organization and that its most efficient members were Communist Party cells—rescue art masterpieces from the clutches of the SS.

TSKFRC-58
(Ap) **Jagdstaffel**; xxx; 1983; O/P; N-R
Int/Nav/Tac-Op
xxx
xxx

A simulation of the World War II Battle of the Philippine Sea.

Tsushima
(C/Ap) **Avalon Hill**; Kiya Overseas Industry; 1985; $30.00; **
Beg/Nav/Tac
1-2

The Battle of Tsushima during the Russo-Japanese War. Clumsy graphics and user interface, but it is one of only two computer games covering this period.

Typhoon of Steel
(C/Ap/Am/I; #53,**54**,64) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Gary Grigsby; 1988; $49.95/$59.95; **+
Adv/Land/Tac
0-2

The sequel to *Panzer Strike* (cf. infra), this covers the remaining theaters of World War II (Pacific, Asia, etc.). Similar to its predecessor with all of its strengths and weaknesses.

U.M.S.
(ST/I; #**43,48**,51) **Firebird**; Ezra Sidran; 1987; $49.95; **
Int/Land/Op
0-2

A wargame design kit, characterized by easy design parameters. However, accuracy is sacrificed for playability, and often playability is sacrificed for graphic display. Maritime operations are ignored, so its universality is not "complete." It will visually impress your friends, although it is clumsy and awkward.

U.M.S. II
(I; #74,75,**87**) **MicroPlay**; Ezra Sidran; 1991; $59.95; **+
Int/Air-Land-Nav/Op-Str
0-multi

A newer version of *U.M.S.* (see above), with more emphasis on strategic operations. A visual feast and a playability desert. The "design-your-own" disk is marketed separately, and company support for the title is tenuous at best.

Under Fire
(A/C/Ap/I; #**25**,27,37,41) **Avalon Hill**; Ralph Bosson; 1985; $59.95; **+
Adv/Land/Tac
1-2

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BLITZKRIEG



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The Russian Front, winter 1942. As the German Sixth Army slowly starves in the devasted city of Stalingrad, the Soviets have launched a second onslaught against the Wehrmacht. In a Moscow radio broadcast, the Russians announced their objective: Encircle and destroy the German garrison entrenched at the vital rail junction of Velikiye Luki. General Perkayev's Third Shock Army has been assigned the mission.

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A tactical simulation of World War II infantry and armor. Open-ended with a versatile map maker and scenario builder, but it does show its age.

Under Southern Skies
(Ap; #4.3) **Avalon Hill**; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; 1984; xxx; N-R
Beg/Sea/Tac
1-2

Up Periscope
(C/I; #38) **ActionSoft**; xxx; 1986; O/P; ***
Adv/Nav/Tac
1

Similar to *Silent Service* (cf. infra). Excellent documentation and good game play, but *Silent Service II* (cf. infra) has assumed the mantle of graphics and utility in the contemporary market.

U.S.A.A.F.
(A/C/Ap; #26,**27**,37) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Gary Grigsby; 1985; O/P; *****
Adv/Air/Str
1-2

An operational/strategic simulation of the bomber offensive over Germany (1943-1945) on a daily basis. Scenarios range from one month to two years, and playing time is almost that long. With German production and industrial devastation the key, it remains a fascinating product. Based upon its commercial success, it would appear that its fans are limited to this reviewer and the designer.

Vulcan
(I; #56,**64**) **CCS**; R. T. Smith; 1989; $39.95; **
Int/Land/Op
1-2

Similar to *Desert Rats* (cf. infra), this simulation covers the Tunisian campaign in WWII North Africa. Mediocre graphics and game play do little to enhance the program.

War at Sea
(Ap/I) **General Quarters**; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; xxx; $35.00; N-R
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op
0-2; M

The exploits of the WWI German cruiser SMS *Emden*.

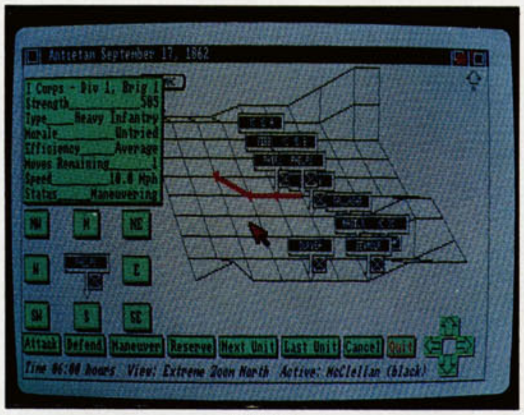
War Eagles
(I; #69) **Cosmi**; Ron Paludan; 1989; xxx; *+
Beg/Air/Tac
1

A World War I flight simulator. One of the first out on the IBM block, its graphics are chunky, game play is awkward, and overall, there is nothing to recommend this as anything more than a thinly disguised arcade product.

Wargame Construction Set
(C/A/I/ST/Am*; #34,75) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Roger Damon; 1986; $29.95/$34.95/$39.95*/**
Int/Land/Tac-Op
1-2

Basically the user-modifiable source code of Roger Damon's previous works (*Operation Whirlwind*, *Field of Fire* and *Panzer Grenadier*—cf. infra), the game's potential for design-your-own scenarios is limited by the failings of the system's mechanics. It is most applicable to the World War II era; a novice may well find its flexibility interesting, although the graphics are dated.

War in the Falklands
(Ap/I) **General Quarters**; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; xxx; $35.00; N-R



U.M.S.

Beg/Nav/Tac-Op
0-2; M

The WWI Battles of the Coronell and the Falklands.

War in the Pacific
(I) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Gary Grigsby; 1992?; ?; N-R
Adv/Land-Nav-Air/Op-Str
0-2

Gary Grigsby moves his Front (Western, Second) to the Pacific. This should be a very detailed simulation of the World War II campaigns, and based on former designs, should come highly recommended.

War in the Pacific
(I) **Koei**; ?; 1992?; ?; N-R
Adv/Land-Nav-Air/Op-Str
0-1

Currently titled *The Admiral's War* in Japan, it is being slightly revamped for American taste.

War in Russia
(A/Ap; #4.4,**5.1**,**5.2**,**29**,37,62,65) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Gary Grigsby; 1984; O/P; ***
Adv/Land/Str
1-2

An operational/strategic simulation of the entire Eastern Front (1941-1945), this game is easily learned and played. Sheer size and certain defects in the artificial intelligence present the difficulty. However, it does show its age, and has been superseded by Gary Grigsby's *Second Front* (cf. infra).

War in the South Pacific
(C/Ap; #36,37) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Gary Grigsby; 1987; O/P; **
Adv/Nav/Op
0-2

World War II in the South Pacific—a logistician's dream (or nightmare!). Complex and interesting, but it attempted to accomplish more than it could deliver. Recommended only to those with a specific interest in the period. For a better treatment, cf. *War in the Pacific* by the same designer.

Warship
(A/C/Ap/ST/I; #33,**34**,37,**42**) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Gary Grigsby; 1986; O/P; **
Adv/Nav/Tac
0-2

A tactical simulation of Pacific surface naval engagements during World War II. The documentation and gameplay seem to gloss over much-needed details as to what is (or should be) happening and the graphics are reminiscent of a sex-education movie showing sperm travelling in various directions. Its main appeal is to the true naval aficionado, and not to those with only a marginal interest.

Warship that Changed History, The
(Ap/I) **General Quarters**; Owen P. Hall, Jr.; xxx; $35.00; N-R
Beg/Nav/Tac-Op
0-2; M

The voyages of the WWI naval vessels *Goeben* and *Breslau*.

Western Front
(Am/I; #**88**) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Gary Grigsby; 1991; $59.95; ****+
Adv/Land/Op-Str
0-2

The sequel to *Second Front* (cf. infra), this covers what most historians refer to as the "Second Front" (i.e. the war between Nazi Germany and the Western Allies, 1944-45).

White Death
(Am/I; #66,**68**) **RAW**; Al and Joseph Benincasa; 1989; $49.95; ***
Adv/Land/Op
1-2; M

The Battle of Velikiyi Luki (World War II, East Front). A direct and literal translation from the boardgame of the same title, it suffers from some user unfriendliness. However, if one liked the board game, this will keep *White Death* in one's library.

Winged Samurai
(Ap/T) **Discovery**; Dave Wesley and Ross Maker; 1980; O/P; N-R
Beg/Air/Tac
1

Similar to *Flying Tigers* (cf. infra), only with worse graphics, if that is possible.

Wings
(Am; #67,69,74,76,**77**,83) **Cinemaware**; xxx; xxx; O/P; ***+
Beg/Air/Tac-Op
1

The first "accurate" World War I flight simulation, this was more of a cinematic treatment of aerial combat than a historically correct gestalt. However, it is fun to play—perhaps falling somewhere between "cotton candy" and "beer and pretzels." One of the Amiga products that this reviewer misses on the PC-machines.

Wings of Fury
(Ap/I; #42,**51**) **Broderbund**; Steve Waldo; 1987; $34.95/$39.95
Beg/Air/Tac
1

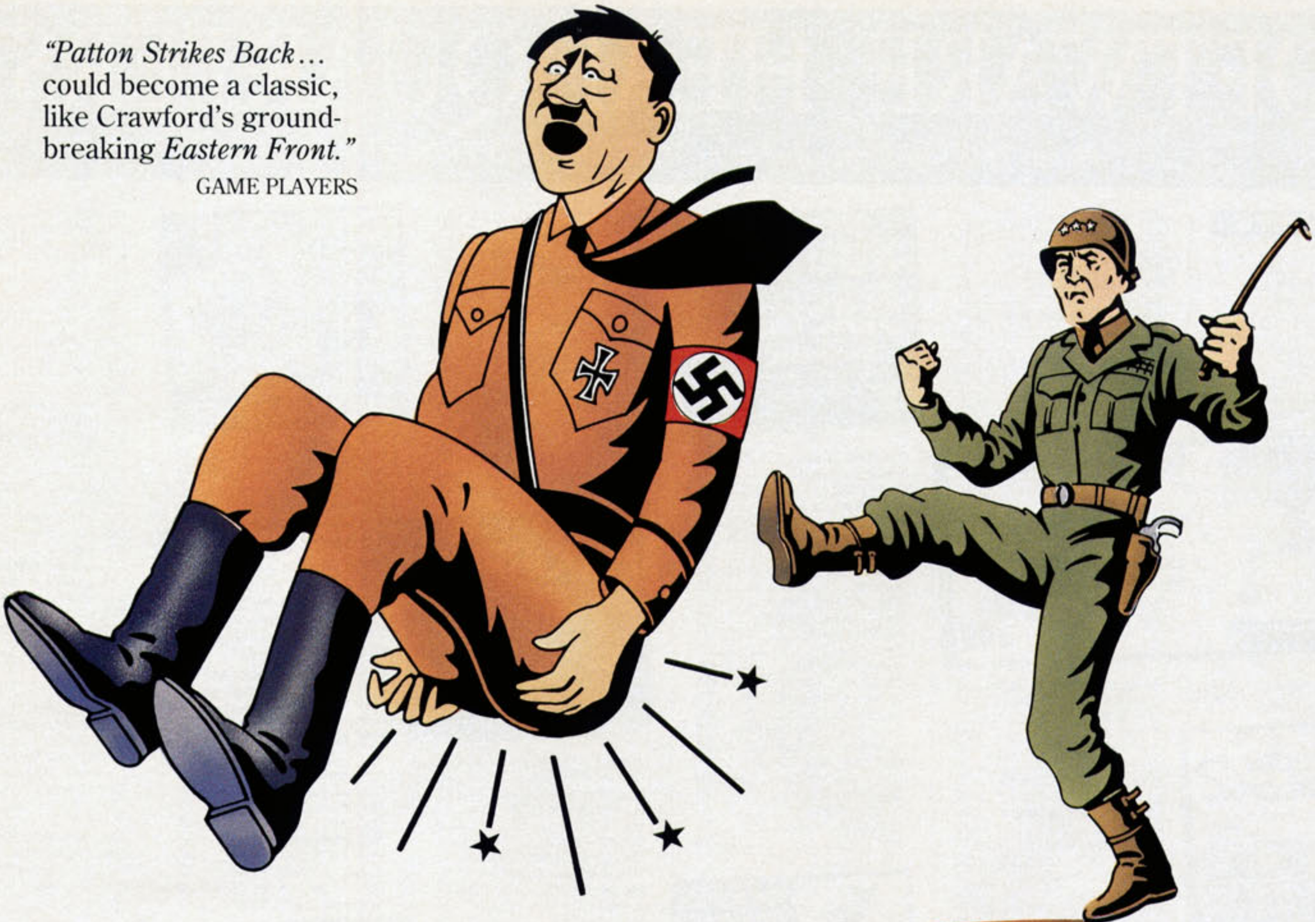
Wings of War
(C) **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**; Charlie Merrow; 1985; O/P; *
Int/Air/Tac
1-2

World War II air combat; poor graphics and mediocre play render this product obsolete.

Wolfpack
(Am/I; #61,62,65,72,**73**) **Broderbund**; John Garcia; 1990; $54.95; **
Int/Nav/Tac
1

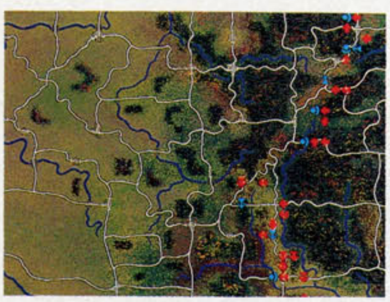
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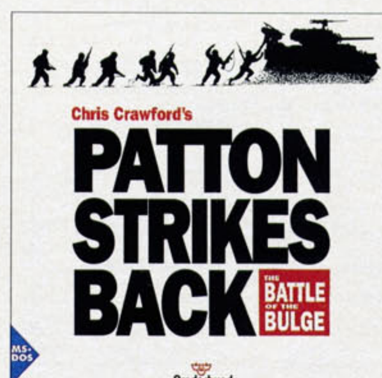
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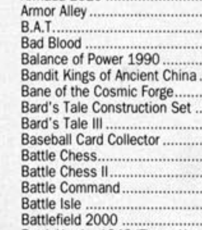
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Warlords *Play Tips*

by *Donald E. Cooper*



One of the most attractive features of **SSG's** *Warlords* is its combat resolution, which is simplified without being simplistic. Although the combat algorithm is described in detail in the instructions, the odds for victory in battles between unequal opponents are not immediately clear. The accompanying spreadsheet analysis describes the probabilities for victory in simple one-on-one situations, as well as providing guidelines for predicting the outcome of more complex battles.

In the table, the two columns on the left list all relevant combinations of attacking factors ("AF") and defending factors ("DF"). Since neither the attacker nor the defender has any special advantage, only the situations in which the attacker has the advantage are listed. If in a given case the attacker is weaker, the labels are simply reversed throughout. The bottom line of the table (1 versus 1) is applicable to all cases of equal attacker and defender strength. The third and fourth columns list the probability that any given hit (out of the two hits required to kill a unit) will be made by the attacker on the defender ("ATT HIT PROB") or by the defender on the attacker ("DEF HIT PROB"). The fifth column ("ATT WIN") lists the probability that the attacker will win the encounter, and the sixth column ("DEF WIN") gives the corresponding probability for a victory by the defense. For simple one-on-one encounters, the win probabilities are a complete description of the possible outcomes. However, in multiple unit battles, the two hits required to kill a unit may come from different opposing units, so it is important to know the expected number of hits that a weaker unit will make against a stronger unit. This is listed in the final column ("AVG DEF HITS").

This table is useful in determining the risks involved in any particular attack and balancing these risks against possible benefits. For example, in the early stages of a game the player's hero (effective combat factor of 6) can attack an enemy city held by a single light infantry army (effective combat factor of 4 in a city). The player will win this battle more than 3/4 of the time, which is a worthwhile risk for an important city. However, if this is a small city with a sluggish economy and is only capable of producing light infantry, the player's hero just might have better things to do.

The righthand column of the table is useful in determining the force required to defeat a powerful (8- or 9-level) army. Suppose an enemy hero accompanied by a griffin army has penetrated behind the player's lines and captured an important city and the ferocity with which the griffins fought suggests that the invading hero has some powerful artifacts. The player could really use those artifacts, but if one delays attacking for a few turns one may confront a large group of armies vectored in from distant cities. How much force is required to defeat the invaders? Suppose the player has a stack of "8" heavy infantry available, and they will be attacking a lone hero with an effective combat factor of "9" (the griffins perished in the attack). Since the attacker has the weaker armies, consult the table row for AF=9 and DF=5, then reverse the listed probabilities. Each heavy infantry army would have less than a 3% chance of defeating the enemy hero single-handedly, but we can expect that it will inflict 0.22 hits on the powerful foe. Thus the expected hits for the entire "8"-army stack is 8 x 0.22= 1.76, which is still less than the 2 hits required for victory. Most likely, the player's entire stack will become cannon fodder and the enemy will emerge untouched! This illustrates the extreme advantage possessed by high-level armies. The odds change if a +1 hero is added to the attacking stack, raising the effective combat strength of the player's heavy infantry to 6. In this case, each army will render an average of 0.33 hits onto the enemy before perishing and the player will probably lose about 6 armies before achieving victory. Thus, the odds have swung slightly in the player's favor and he may want to attack.

For the mathematically inclined, here is the rationale behind this analysis. The attacker hit probability (AHP) is the probability that the attacker will hit the defender (=1-0.1DF), multiplied by the probability that the defender will miss the attacker (=0.1AF), divided by the probability that either the attacker or defender will hit the other:

$$AHP = [(1\text{-}0.1DF)(0.1AF)] / [(1\text{-}0.1DF)(0.1AF) + (1\text{-}0.1AF)(0.1DF)]$$

The equation for the DHP is similar, with the AF and DF switched.

Either side will win the battle whenever it gets two hits before the opponent. If AH denotes an attacker hit and DH a defender hit, then the following combinations are a win for the attacker:

AH,AHprobability=AHP^2

AH,DH,AHprobability=AHP^2xDHP

DH,AH,AHprobability=AHP^2xDHP

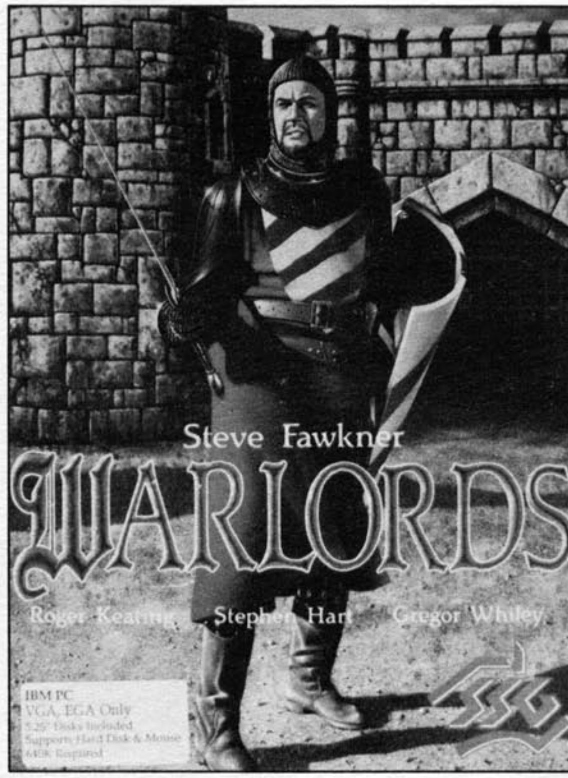
Thus, the probability of an attacker win is $AHP^2 + 2 \times AHP^2 \times DHP$. Similarly, the probability of a win for the defense is $DHP^2 + 2 \times DHP^2 \times AHP$.

The calculation of the average defender hits is somewhat more complicated. This quantity will be the sum of (1) the average hits expected before the attacker makes one hit, and (2) the average hits made after the first hit has been sustained and before the second hit kills the defender. These two terms will be equal, and each is the sum of the infinite series $DHP + DHP^2 + DHP^3 + \ldots = DHP/(1\text{-}DHP)$.

It is useful to keep this table by one's computer whenever playing *Warlords* and to consult it often. **CGW**

AF	DF	AttHitProb	DefHitProb	AttWin	DefWin	AvgDefHits
9	8	69.23%	30.77%	77.42%	22.58%	0.89
9	7	79.41%	20.59%	89.03%	10.97%	0.52
9	6	85.71%	14.29%	94.46%	5.54%	0.33
9	5	90.00%	10.00%	97.20%	2.80%	0.22
9	4	93.10%	6.90%	98.64%	1.36%	0.15
9	3	95.45%	4.55%	99.40%	0.60%	0.10
9	2	97.30%	2.70%	99.78%	0.22%	0.06
9	1	98.78%	1.22%	99.96%	0.04%	0.02
8	7	63.16%	36.84%	69.28%	30.72%	1.17
8	6	72.73%	27.27%	81.74%	18.26%	0.75
8	5	80.00%	20.00%	89.60%	10.40%	0.50
8	4	85.71%	14.29%	94.46%	5.54%	0.33
8	3	90.32%	9.68%	97.37%	2.63%	0.21
8	2	94.12%	5.88%	99.00%	1.00%	0.13
8	1	97.30%	2.70%	99.78%	0.22%	0.06
7	6	60.87%	39.13%	66.05%	33.95%	1.29
7	5	70.00%	30.00%	78.40%	21.60%	0.86
7	4	77.78%	22.22%	87.38%	12.62%	0.57
7	3	84.48%	15.52%	93.52%	6.48%	0.37
7	2	90.32%	9.68%	97.37%	2.63%	0.21
7	1	95.45%	4.55%	99.40%	0.60%	0.10
6	5	60.00%	40.00%	64.80%	35.20%	1.33
6	4	69.23%	30.77%	77.42%	22.58%	0.89
6	3	77.78%	22.22%	87.38%	12.62%	0.57
6	2	85.71%	14.29%	94.46%	5.54%	0.33
6	1	93.10%	6.90%	98.64%	1.36%	0.15
5	4	60.00%	40.00%	64.80%	35.20%	1.33
5	3	70.00%	30.00%	78.40%	21.60%	0.86
5	2	80.00%	20.00%	89.60%	10.40%	0.50
5	1	90.00%	10.00%	97.20%	2.80%	0.22
4	3	60.87%	39.13%	66.05%	33.95%	1.29
4	2	72.73%	27.27%	81.74%	18.26%	0.75
4	1	85.71%	14.29%	94.46%	5.54%	0.33
3	2	63.16%	36.84%	69.28%	30.72%	1.17
3	1	79.41%	20.59%	89.03%	10.97%	0.52
2	1	69.23%	30.77%	77.42%	22.58%	0.89
1	1	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	2.00

Warlords: Probabilities for Victory and Casualties Inflicted in One-on-One Battles





Conversions Received

Hard Nova (Electronic Arts) Amiga

The Immortal (Electronic Arts) IBM

Starflight 2 (Electronic Arts) Amiga, Macintosh

Gradius (Konami) Super Nintendo

Space Quest IV (Sierra) Macintosh

Flight of the Intruder (Spectrum HoloByte) Amiga

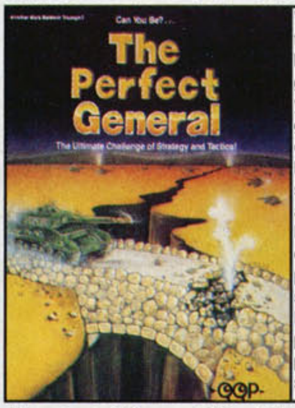
Secret of the Silver Blades (SSI) Macintosh



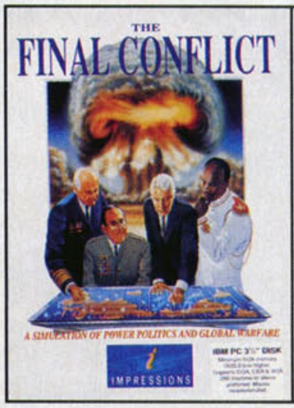
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'PERFECT GENERAL' from **QQP INC** is a turn based ground war game. Features 12 years of play testing, great maps in VGA, easy to use mouse or keyboard interface, 14 scenarios, very strong artificial intelligence, hidden movement, line of sight option, in depth player ranking system, saves your career history as you play, 2 player option, modem play, sound board support. **$34**



'FINAL CONFLICT' from **IMPRESSIONS** is a strategy game of power politics & global warfare. Allocate resources. Build factories and control food production. Produce armies, tanks, ships, & missiles. Send out spies & conduct diplomacy to uncover military secrets & win allies. Features 95 countries, nuclear winter, optional arcade missile sequence, entirely icon driven. **$34**

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'RED BARON' from **DYNAMIX** is the best WWI flight simulator. Take either side, fly 28 aircraft including Albatros D3, Fokker Triplane, DH2 Pusher, Sopwith Camel, Spad 7. Amazing AI, fly against real aces who use historically accurate tactics. Fly multiplane missions vs multiple enemies, single mission or campaign game. VCR with pan & zoom, 256 color VGA, & sound support. **$34**

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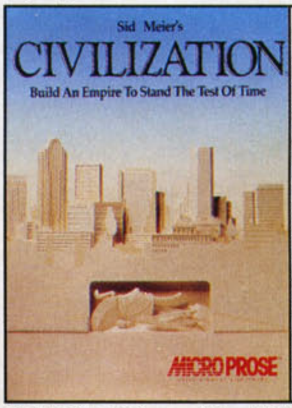


'HYPERSPEED' from **MICROPROSE** is a combination 3D space combat simulator and roleplaying game. Pilot a complex starship armed with fighters, kamikaze ships, plasma canon and remote probes. Conduct deep space diplomacy, negotiate with dozens of alien races, make alliances and treaties, each alien race responds according to its own customs and hidden agendas. **$39**



MINDCRAFT'S RULES OF ENGAGEMENT is a real time strategic space combat game. Command a starship and an entire fleet with subordinate ship commanders in multiple combat missions. Using **BREACH 2** you can send out boarding & landing parties. A comprehensive mission builder lets you design enemy races, starships, solar systems, even the personalities of ship commanders. **$38**

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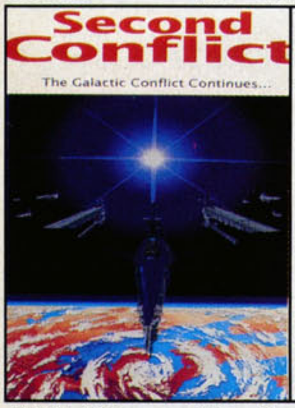
'CIVILIZATION' from **MICROPROSE** "is a competitive multi-player strategy game with a great deal of replayability" **CGW**. You explore cities, continents, and the world in an **EMPIRE** like way. You make economic decisions prioritizing technological growth in order to advance more rapidly than the other players. Sort of a cross betweeen **SIMCITY** & **EMPIRE**. **$39**

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'SECOND CONFLICT' from **JSOFT** is a space strategy game. Control the economy, military, and civilian population. Balance population growth against military recruiting. Allocate resources to produce battleships, planetary defenses, stealth ships, transports and missiles. Multiple human and computer players, point and click WINDOWS interface, and a scenario editor are included. **$34**

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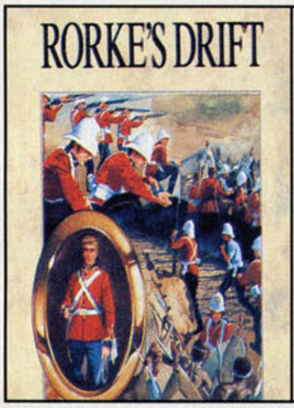


TIGLON'S 'DECISION AT GETTYSBURG' gives you command of either army at the turning point of the American Civil War. Features include real time play, historical accuracy, hidden or revealed movement and 147 square miles of detailed VGA maps. The simulation allows you to combine units, create new smaller units, transfer men or supplies and send out patrols. **$29**

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'RORKE'S DRIFT' from **IMPRESSIONS** is a detailed simulation of the battle between 137 british soldiers & 4000 Zulu warriors that took place Jan 22 1879. You command the British in their attempt to hold out aginst the onslaught. You control each man, standing, sitting, prone, aiming, firing, reloading, running or walking. With 3D map, animated combat & movement mouse support & 256 color VGA. **$34**

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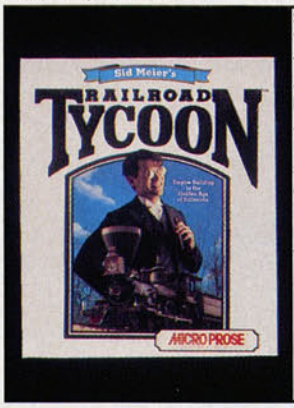
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'COHORT' from **IMPRESSIONS** is an unusual wargame using a miniatures style interface to cover combat between roman legions & their enemies. Features animated combat & movement, 7 unit types, infantry, cavalry, & archers, user definable army composition, 4 different maps, scenario builder, stop & give orders real time combat, 256 color VGA, & sound board support. **$34**

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SID MEIER'S 'RAILROAD TYCOON' from **MICROPROSE** is a game of empire building in the golden age of railroads. You lay track, manipulate stock, schedule trains, operate signals, engage in rate wars, and build industry all in an effort to outwit, outsmart, out scoundrel the rail barrons of history. It is not easy. This is CGW game of the year and one of the best games of all time. **$34**

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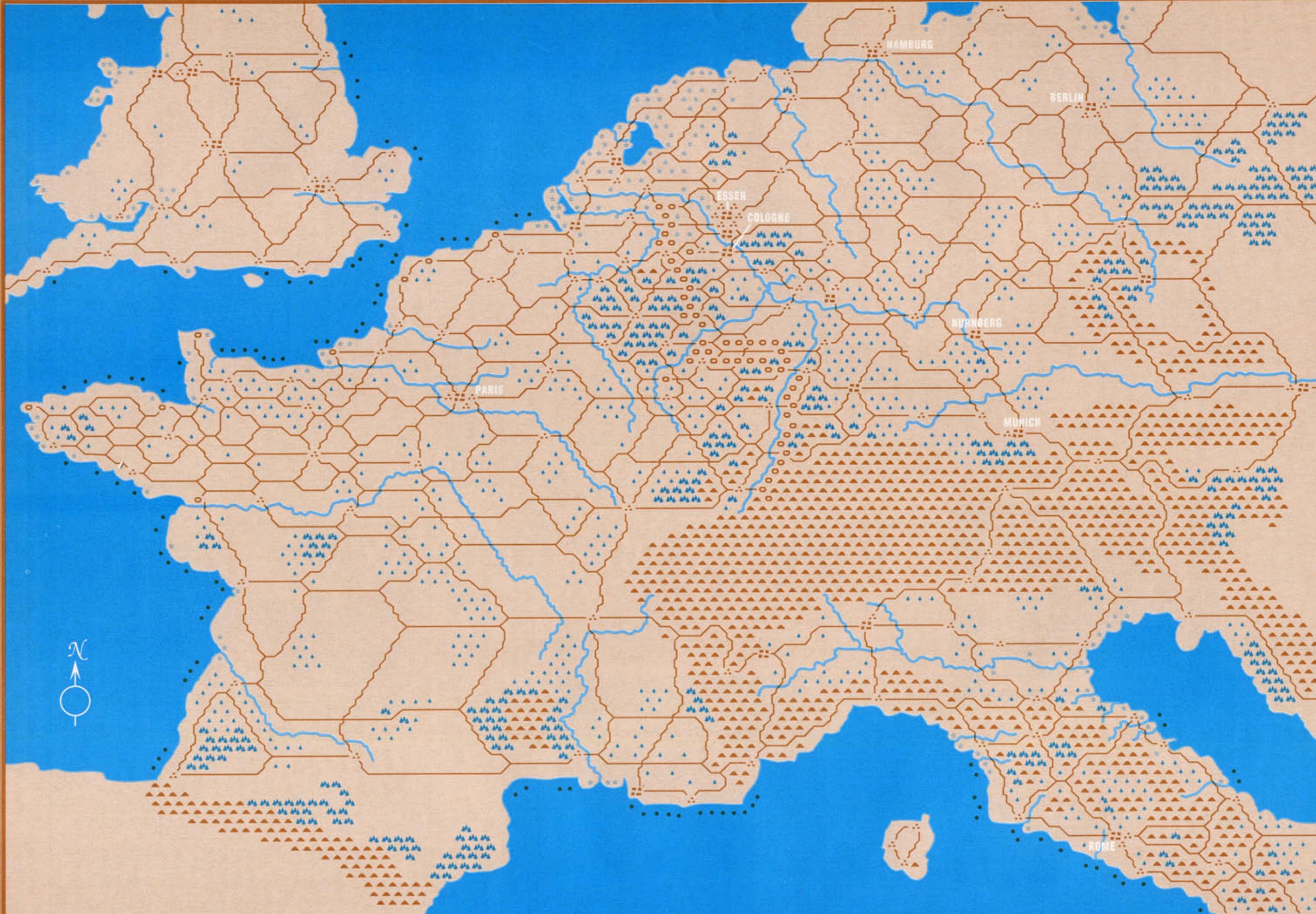
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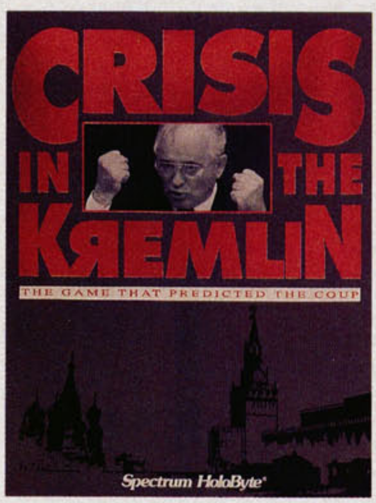






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Western Front

by M. Evan

Western Front is a detailed simulation of the Allied invasion of Fortress Europa and the destruction of the Third Reich. The sequel to **Second Front**, it covers the theater most familiar to Americans. This article will note various strategies and tactics which may assist the player.

The Allies: Basic Strategy

No matter how much one dreams of invading Fortress Europe and blitzkrieging the Wehrmacht with little loss, it is wise to forget it! Or better yet, it would be useful to read John Ellis' *Brute Force*—a historical study which explains how the Western Allies simply bludgeoned the Nazi war machine with superior equipment and manpower (actually, the Russian Front took care of the latter parameter). Throughout the war, sixty percent of German manpower was engaged *Nach Osten*, and the Western Front was almost a sideshow. The German war machine simply does not have sufficient manpower to offer a defense in depth.

Therefore, one must use the "Rubber Band" offensive strategy—keep stretching the German defense. It cannot be strong enough everywhere; as it is attrited, a weakness will develop that will allow the Allies to pour through. Depending on the nature of the breakthrough, a Falaise Pocket may be established that can bag a large number of troops. The Germans will retreat through France, and establish a defensive line on the West Wall, after which one reverts to the Rubber Band again, until such time as another hole is created, and onwards to the destruction of the Reich.

Remember the victory conditions. The destruction of large numbers of German divisions is appealing, but victory belongs to the Allied player who captures four points worth of German cities. While Berlin is worth three by itself, often it is easier to capture four separate one-point urban areas.

Invasion Sites—Primary:

While there are numerous invasion sites, a detailed examination and/or actual play will rapidly reveal that there is only one site which offers a sufficient beachhead for expansion, geographic propinquity to Allied airpower, and minimal Axis reaction—Normandy. An invasion at the Pas de Calais will generate a strong German reaction, and the Allies may not be able to establish more than a toehold on Festung Europa.

Italy is another story. A decisive invasion will be virtually impossible due to the rough and mountainous terrain of the Italian peninsula—coupled with the fact that once Italy is liberated, one must then contend with breaking over and through the Alps. It can be done, but it is a very risky undertaking.

Secondary:

Secondary invasion sites offer more latitude.

Italy: Historically, Anzio was a sound strategic concept ineptly coupled with the tactical initiative of World War I's Gallipoli—which resulted in what was facetiously referred to as "the largest P.O.W. camp in World War II." However, the basic function of the Italian Theater is to tie up the maximum number of enemy troops while minimizing one's own commitment—unless one can achieve that rare and elusive breakthrough. Thus, this reviewer recommends several possible small invasions north of the front lines. They may not achieve a break-through, but they will tie up German troops. Eventually, the German line will become too thin and will crack in several places—then the exploitation phase can begin.

France and the Benelux: Anvil/Dragoon, the invasion of southern France, historically did little. By the time of the virtually unopposed landings, the defensive lines had shifted east. In game terms, if an invasion of southern France is necessary to achieve a breakthrough, this means that the Allied player has made some serious errors. This invasion can do some damage, but it is normally better to save the amphibious landing craft and supplies for mini-landings along the northern coasts. In this manner, the forces facing the main thrust of the Allied armies will have to stretch like the desired Rubber Band and will eventually break.

Airborne Forces: Think of airborne forces as "Kamikazes without Planes." Not powerful enough to seize and hold terrain independently, they are magnificent for drawing off enemy forces and allowing the major combat elements to achieve a breakthrough. A somewhat callous handling of airborne elements can pay substantial dividends—and, occasionally, they can even be rescued before decimation. An airborne drop on Genoa, resupplied by air (a Western version of Goering's promise regarding Stalingrad), can often allow the elements to dig in and protect themselves until a quick breakthrough is achieved by the infantry divisions, for instance. Airborne elements allow for plenty of strategic creativity.

Political Points: Political points represent a sort of "favors used." Historically, the Allied strategic air forces detested CAS (close air support) and tactical missions. Thus, it was only on rare occasions that they could be "diverted" from their primary missions. Similarly, the backlash from relieving a general has its own cost—his patrons and subordinates may not take kindly to his relief. Thus, each general has a "political cost" attached to his persona and, as one might guess, Montgomery has one of the highest ratings in the game.

The Allies only get two political points per turn (at more difficult levels, this may be reduced to zero!). An interdiction mission costs thirty (30) political points—this is actually a massive "carpet bombing", similar to that historically used in the breakout of **Operation Cobra** (where the Panzer Lehr division was virtually exterminated, as well as LTG Leslie McNair, who happened to be the recipient of a "shortfall" by friendly fire). This mission is guaranteed to punch a hole in any German line; the problem is that it is politically and prohibitively expensive.

One can usually achieve better results by a closure of the battlefield. Many air missions will be conducted independently by the computer tactical air forces, and it is "cheaper" to isolate a sector of the battlefield (e.g. Normandy) by insuring that all bridges into the area have been destroyed. Since the computer will usually destroy the bulk of them, it is cheaper to pay a two-point political cost per bridge and go after the one or two bridges still remaining. Similarly, an effective isolation of German forces will wreak havoc with their communications, and allow an Allied player to recreate a Falaise Pocket (hopefully without the Gap).

Insofar as relieving generals are concerned, on the offensive, it rarely matters. Since the Allies should rarely be forced on the defensive, it is simply too expensive to relieve Montgomery (which this reviewer would like to do, based on general principles), or any other leader. The costs incurred could be better expended elsewhere.

Strategy & Tactics

Brooks

Mobile Warfare: Creating a large armored force south of Metz may often compel the Germans to react in a mobile war. By this time, their armor forces have been depleted, and the Allied forces can usually sweep around and cut off the West Wall with ease.

Corps and Divisions: A large corps is a clumsy corps. Thus, when too many troops are compressed into a corps frontage, they take unnecessary casualties. Therefore, insure that corps are composed of three divisions and allow the remainder to be used in reserve. Often, the tactical commander will force-feed these reserves into the battles, where they will have a combat-multiplier effect.

Production: The Allies have sufficient industrial capacity to win the war. Replacing obsolete armor with the M4/76 Sherman and the Firefly may result in a shortfall for as long as a month, but there will be periods of inactivity while preparing for the next major push. If this activity is coupled with poor weather, the shortfall will be rendered harmless, and when the offensive is resumed, it will have a much more powerful thrust. Similarly, airpower will sweep the Luftwaffe from the skies. Note that the P-38 Lightning in its capacity as a fighter-bomber has the same load capacity and cost as the A20 Havoc bomber, yet it has twice the range. A word to the wise....

The Axis

Basic Strategy: Never attack! Repeat it over and over, "*Never* attack!" The Germans simply do not have sufficient manpower or equipment to engage in a mobile confrontation with the Allied forces. Of course, there is always an exception to a rule; an airborne landing behind one's lines may safely be assaulted, but that should be about the only exception. Too often, a ripe isolated Allied unit can be destroyed, but in so doing, the Wehrmacht will find that its units become decisively engaged by follow-on Allied units and thereby defeated in detail.

Does this mean that the German must simply accept every Allied push? Of course not! The German "offensives" should be limited to bombardment attacks. This type of "offense" will minimize German losses and allow the Wehrmacht to remain in dug-in and fortified positions.

Trade space for time. The Germans do not have the ability to defeat the Allies, but can achieve a victory simply by insuring their own survival. Pray for bad weather, as it allows safer movement and retards the Allied offensives.

Political Points: Political points are essential to the German. The replacement of commanders is much more important in order to conduct a viable defensive strategy. Therefore, use capable "firemen" to be rushed to the areas of greatest risk. Politically unreliable generals may incur a random disaster (i.e. involvement in an attempt to assassinate the Fuhrer) and be rendered *hors de combat*, but the maximum utilization should be made from the more capable leaders while they are available.

Recognize One's Limitations: Defending in the hedgerows of Normandy can bottle the Allies up for a period of time. However, overstaying one's welcome can result in becoming mired, weakened, lacking supplies and unable to evacuate to the next defensive line. Only practice will enable a player to determine when discretion becomes the better part of valor.

In fact, a quick retreat from Normandy in order to establish a defense along the Seine and other river systems can be effective. Note that the Eastern Front is always a source of dismal tidings. That is, in normal activity turns, one division shatters, while during heavy activity, four German divisions are shattered. This impinges heavily on manpower assets available. The normal/heavy activity is independent of Western Front activity, and is date-oriented (quasi-historical).

Production: German production is a source of little joy. The air war is a lost effort; while ME-262As can be built, their effect against the Allied air juggernaut is minimal. This does not mean that pinpricks have no effects; simply do not expect miracles from the "secret weapons of the Luftwaffe." Armor should be upgraded as rapidly as possible, but in the Axis case, a shortfall can prove fatal.

Conclusions

Western Front is a player's challenge. The Allied side is more interesting to play, as it creates the tempo of the game. The German side is recommended for those interested in a purely defensive contest. The computer opponent is capable but not brilliant. Therefore, while it will not make any brilliant counter-strokes, similarly it will not make any egregious errors. Time is the arbiter of victory. **cgw**

Finding a Focal Point

by Johnny L. Wilson



State of the Industry: As of this writing, this editor has just returned from the 7th Annual Conference of the Software Publishers Association. Though the SPA extended a professional courtesy to all journalists who attended, *this* journalist was very concerned by what he observed. The SPA no longer seems responsive to its members. The relatively small consumer-oriented firms who founded the organization have very little say in the way the association pursues its mission. For example, the much-ballyhooed anti-piracy campaign has been completely focused on business software. One wonders how much effort it would have taken to include consumer software in the expensive campaign. Yet the mega-corporations that have taken control of the organization have no desire to include many of the formative companies in the SPA in *their* effort.

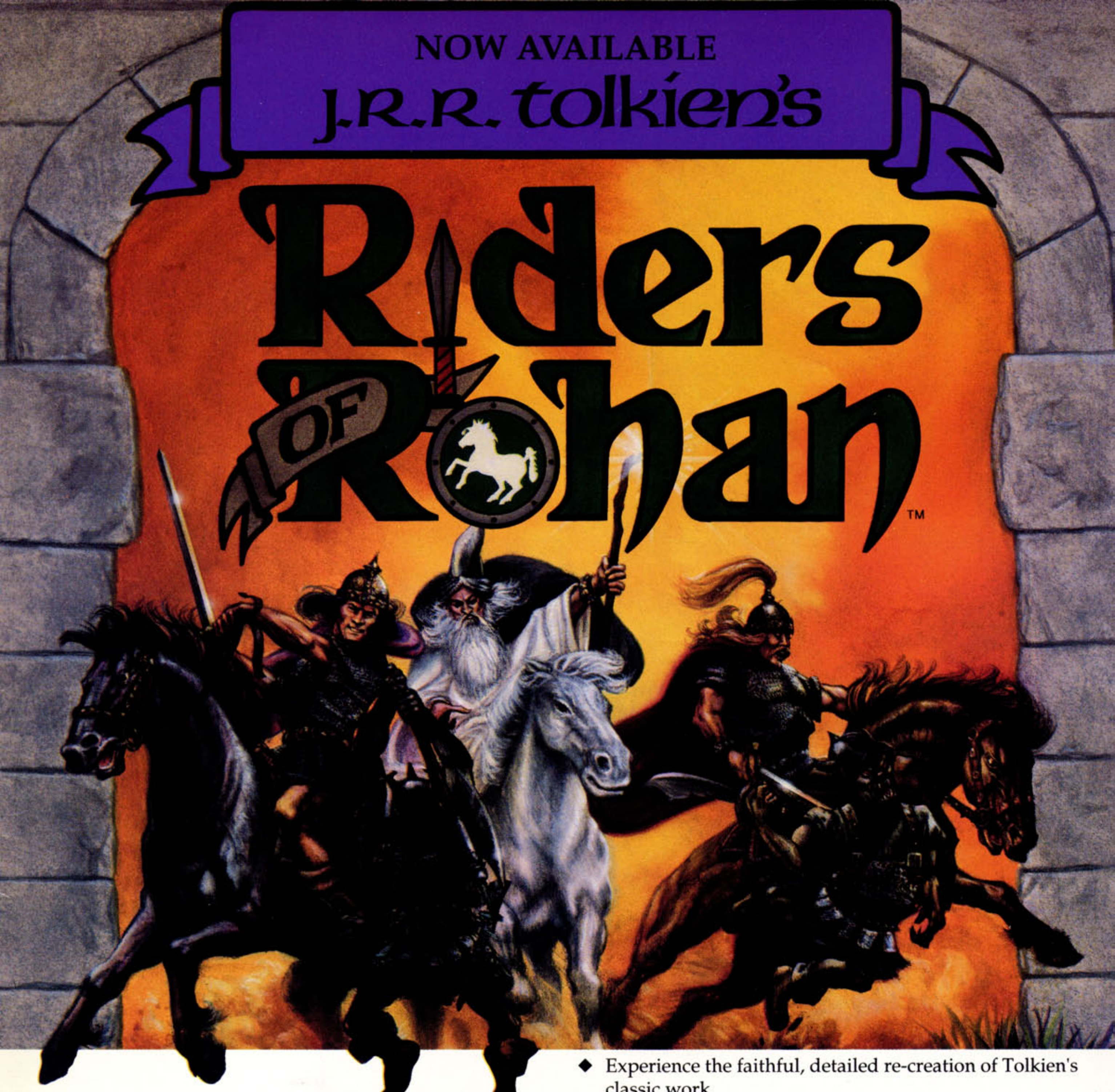
Indeed, it appears that the SPA may be nearing a fragmentation. Several major entertainment software publishers informed this editor that they are now choosing which one or two employees would attend SPA meetings rather than bringing their entire management team to the functions. They perceive that the cost has far outpaced the value. Yet when they protested the increases in dues and conference charges, they were merely informed that their expenses were less than most trade associations. So at the same time that the conferences are becoming less valuable for networking (due to decreased participation), the cost of doing business at such a conference is going up. Surely the SPA could create a tiered dues/participation schedule that takes corporate size into consideration.

Of more importance to consumers, the SPA seems unwilling to focus beyond the issues of, for example, how the retail channel feels about publishers and what hardware platforms they don't have confidence in at this particular time. Instead of forming work groups to standardize "Install" programs, software drivers and minimal levels of hardware to support, the conference program most resembles a relic of the recent consumer electronic past, a polyvinyl record with a needle stuck in the groove—repetitive. If the SPA cannot be forced out of the groove, perhaps it is time to form a new industry association which is more equivalent to a compact disc than a polyvinyl record.

One perception keeps pounding away at this journalist's head. If the entertainment software industry hangs onto its proprietary software tricks, self-perpetuating industry traditions and short-sighted approach to future development, we will never see this industry capture the hearts and minds of ordinary people. If the entertainment software industry does not find some way to agree upon and support the equivalent of a VHS standard box that can function as a basic appliance whether the "user" ever understands all its advanced functions or not, there will never really be a "mass market." The industry will have lost the opportunity and will find itself as outmoded as a **Betamax** or a stereo turntable.

State of the Magazine: *CGW*, like the industry it covers, must continually strive for a focus point. There are so many different directions that entertainment software can move in the next decade: videogame machines, multimedia boxes, interactive television, fiber-optic network-based entertainments, venue-based interactive experiences and virtual reality-based amusement parks. This means that the journalists who cover such an industry must attempt to be aware of what might be happening in all these areas.

It is an exciting, but difficult, chore to try to present the relevant implications of these new and varied approaches to computerized entertainment without offending one's traditional audience. Yet, part of our charter is to keep our hobbyist readers informed of the interrelationships between entertainment software firms and corporations involved in these other approaches. This is why we continue to devote space to "industry" stories such as the formation of **SMSG** software, the meetings of the Software Publishers Association and conferences on future endeavors such as Intertainment '91. In this way, we hope, *CGW*'s readers will be the information surfers of the future who know both "What's happenin' now" and "What's about to happen?" CGW



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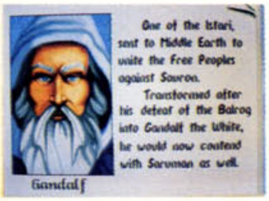
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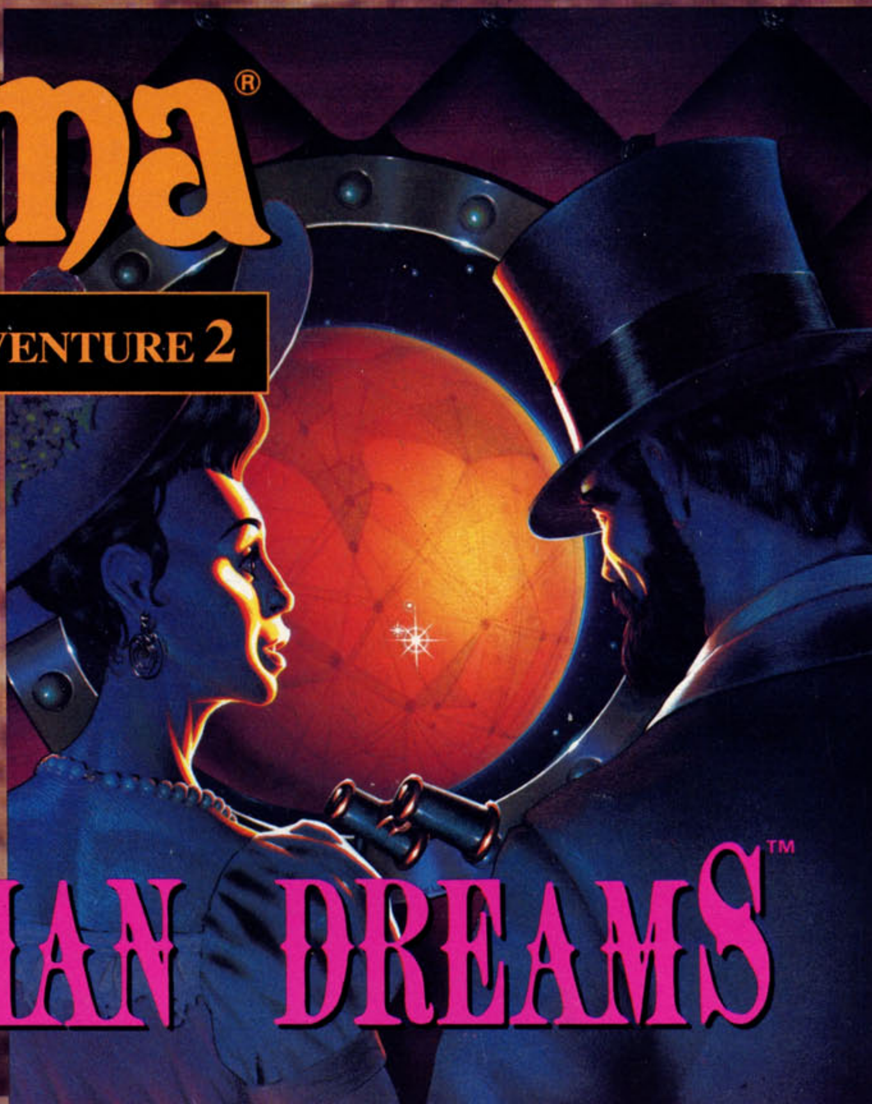






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